

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT MAGAZINE

Volume 35 Issue 2 Winter 2014



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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Human Development Magazine is a quarterly publication for people involved in the work of fostering the growth of others. This includes persons involved in religious leadership and formation, spiritual direction, pastoral care and education interested in the development of the whole person.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Winter, 2014

Dear Friends:

Merry Christmas and a Healthy, Happy New Year!

We are delighted to offer you this next edition of *Human Development*! This is a special year in the Church's history as we celebrate the "Year of Consecrated Life" as declared by Pope Francis. We too thank God for all religious in the Church, for their incredible past and for filling us with a sense of hope for the future.

This time of year always offers us a chance to reflect upon God's coming into our world and the humbling nature of grace and love made real. The daily, and sometimes mundane, routines become tinged with opportunity to see and touch transcendence and the extraordinary. The Word becomes enfleshed yet again in our hearts and lives. As then and now, the world seems at times dark, filled with hatred, senseless violence of the innocent, and yet the angels' proclamation still echoes across the centuries. Peace to all of good will!

We offer this next edition mindful of the truly amazing reaction to the first "Phoenix" edition. We cannot thank you enough for the many positive reactions to our first effort. You can see some of them in the "Letter to the Editors." We mailed out over 16,000 copies of this edition worldwide and are reprinting another 5,000 more because of the interest and the overwhelming reaction. We need you to continue to spread the good word and to write us with your feedback. Please feel free to write us at editor@hdmag.org. Your letters are encouraging so please keep them coming!

This edition will feature various aspects of a theme that we will revisit often in this and many other future editions of *Human Development*. Medicine and psychology refer to this edition's theme as "flourishing." This edition features the first in a

two-part interview with Bishop Thomas Dowd, Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal, Canada. Though he talks about the essential relationship of the Bishop to his priests in a presbyterate, we strongly believe it is a wonderful model of healthy and holy leadership – or the ability of a leader to create and nurture a "flourishing" environment. This is applicable to every religious leader – clergy, religious or lay - in the Church today. Carole Wroblewski's wonderful treatment of "Transitions" will highlight the personal and communal need to manage this area of our lives well in order to live a more full and healthy life. Sam Mikhail's excellent summary of the research on resilience – the capacity and ability to respond well to difficulty - will highlight one key aspect of flourishing - the ability to manage adversity or distress.

This edition ends with an inspiring reflection written by Sister Regina Coll, CSJ, Emeritus Director of Field Education in the Department of Theology at Notre Dame University. We hope that you too might meditate upon the wisdom found here and allow all of us to see again the glory of God's creation. Enjoy!

Peace and prayers,

Fr. Gerard J. McGlone, SJ, PhD
Executive Editor

Len Sperry, MD, PhD, DMin.
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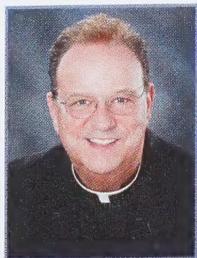
*The just shall flourish like the palm tree,
shall grow like a cedar of Lebanon.*

*Planted in the house of the LORD,
they shall flourish in the courts of our God.*

*They shall bear fruit even in old age,
they will stay fresh and green,*

*To proclaim: “The LORD is just,
my rock!” Psalm 92:14-16*

EDITORIAL LEADERSHIP TEAM



Fr. Gerard J. McGlone, S.J., Ph.D.

Executive Editor

Father McGlone, S.J., Ph.D. is a Jesuit priest of the Maryland Province of Jesuits ordained in 1987. He is also Executive Director of the Guest House Institute. He has a doctoral degree in clinical psychology and an extensive background as a clinical psychotherapist for over 26 years. He has written numerous peer reviewed articles, chapters and sexual abuse prevention manuals in the field of psychology and recently won a Catholic Press Award for his book, *The Inner Life of Priests*.



Len Sperry, M.D., Ph.D., D. Min.

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Len Sperry, M.D., Ph.D., D. Min. is a professor at Florida Atlantic University and the Medical College of Wisconsin. Board certified in Psychiatry, Preventive Medicine, and Clinical Psychology, he is a fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, American College of Preventive Medicine, and American Psychological Association. He is co-editor of the APA journal *Spirituality in Clinical Practice* and has published 80 books including *The Inner Life of Priests; Sex, Priestly Ministry and the Church; and Spirituality in Clinical Practice*.



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Associate Editor

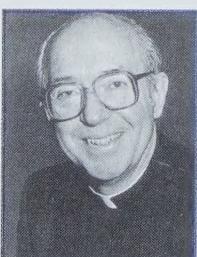
Dr. Fernando A. Ortiz, Ph.D. ABPP is a licensed and board certified psychologist. He is currently the Director of the Counseling Center at Gonzaga University. He obtained a doctoral degree in counseling psychology and provides consultation and expertise to dioceses and religious communities on intercultural competencies, self-care, healthy sexuality, and resilience. He is a member of the USCCB National Review Board.



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Graphics and Layout Editor

Kim is the owner of Studio K Design (studiok-design.com) She taught graphic design, web design and studio art for 10 years. She has been a branding strategist, graphic artist and web designer for over 20 years, developing product and marketing for brands such as Target, Nickelodeon and Scholastic. She manages the Human Development Magazine print and digital design along with the design of hdmag.org.



James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.

Founding Editor

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D. was a Jesuit priest, physician and psychiatrist. He founded this journal in 1980 to assist anyone in Church leadership. Fr. Gill entered into eternal life in 2003.



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PROFESSOR SHEILA THE BARONESS HOLLINS



Professor Sheila the Baroness Hollins is an independent Member of the House of Lords where she speaks on mental health, disability and human rights issues. She is Emeritus Professor in Psychiatry of Disability, St George's, University of London, Honorary Professor in the Department of Theology and Religion, University of Durham and has recently been appointed to the Papal Commission on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults. She has received four honorary doctorates, and is a Fellow and Past President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Fellow of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and of the Royal College of Physicians. She is a past President of the British Medical Association, and currently chairs the BMA Board of Science. She is Executive Chair of Beyond Words, which publishes picture books with an international reach to help children and adults with communication disabilities to communicate better about life experiences, relationships and wellbeing (booksbeyondwprds.co.uk).

ARCHBISHOP GREGORY M. AYMOND



The 14th Archbishop of New Orleans, Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond, is the first New Orleans Native to serve as Archbishop in the 216 year history of the Archdiocese. In 1971, he received his undergraduate degree from St. Joseph Seminary College. In 1975, he received a master's degree in divinity from Notre Dame Seminary and was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of New Orleans. He was a professor and later rector of St. John Vianney Preparatory School until 1981. He then served as professor of pastoral theology and homiletics and director of pastoral education at Notre Dame Seminary where he later served as president-rector for 14 years. He also served as Executive Director of the Archdiocesan Department of Christian Formation and as the Archdiocesan Director for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. In the 1980s he founded and led a regular medical mission program to Nicaragua. Archbishop Aymond was ordained Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans in 1997, named Coadjutor Bishop of Austin in 2000, and elevated to Archbishop of New Orleans in 2009. He has served as chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People and the Committee on Divine Worship. He was also Chair of the Board of the National Catholic Educational Association from 2000-2004. He continues to serve on several US Bishops' committees and currently chairs the board of the National Catholic Bioethics Center,

ANA MARÍA PINEDA, R.S.M.



Ana María Pineda, R.S.M., was born in San Salvador, El Salvador, and was raised in the Latino neighborhood of San Francisco, California. Pineda is a member of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. She is an associate professor in the Religious Studies Department at Santa Clara University in California, where she regularly teaches courses in Latino/Hispanic theology. Pineda has published numerous articles on topics related to Hispanic Ministry, popular religion, pastoral practices and the importance of oral tradition. One of her research interests has focused on the lives and legacies of Archbishop Romero and Rutilio Grande, S.J. Pineda has served on the board of the Louisville Institute, the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the U.S. (ACHTUS), and the Advisory Committee for the Hispanic Theological Scholarship Initiative (HTI) and many others. Pineda is a founding member of the influential Hispanic Theological Initiative, which provides scholarships and mentoring for Latino/a doctoral theological students. She is the past president of ACHTUS.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

"I was delighted to receive the first issue of the "new" Human Development Magazine. Congratulations and thanks to all who worked so hard to re-launch this great publication.

I was especially pleased to see Mary Johnson's work included in this issue. Mary and I are grammar school classmates. Even as an eighth grader at Sacred Heart Grammar School in Springfield, MA, Mary's insight and compassion were evident!"

All the best,
Fr Mark Stelzer, S.T.D.
College of our Lady of the Elms

"The first issue of Human Development arrived in the mail today. Congratulations on a spectacular re-launch! Layout and graphics are first-class"

Fr. John Steingraeber, CSSR
Associate Director Conference of
Major Superiors of Men

"I received my copy of the Human Development Magazine today. It is very well done. Congrats. Great job."

Dick Durkin, MBA
Board of Trustees, Guest House

"Just read a few articles in the HDM and they were excellent. HDM is a quality publication and I can't wait for the next issue! Onward and upward."

Bob Koval, MBA
Interim CEO, Guest House

"Very happy to see you are back in publication. My best wishes and prayers for another long run."

Sincerely,
Paul Leddy
Phaokee, FL

"Congratulations on the re-launching of Human Development. The first issue promises great future issues! Thank you for driving this project and thus offering us a marvelous resource."

Fraternally,
Fr John Pavlik, OFM Cap
Executive Director, CMSM
Conference of Major Superiors of Men

"I received a copy of "Human Development Magazine" in the mail and was very impressed with the total concept of the magazine, the contents, and the very impressive artistic layout. Jerry, Len, you, and all on the editorial team are to be congratulated and thanked for your wonderful work. I see a very bright and inspiring future for Human Development Magazine."

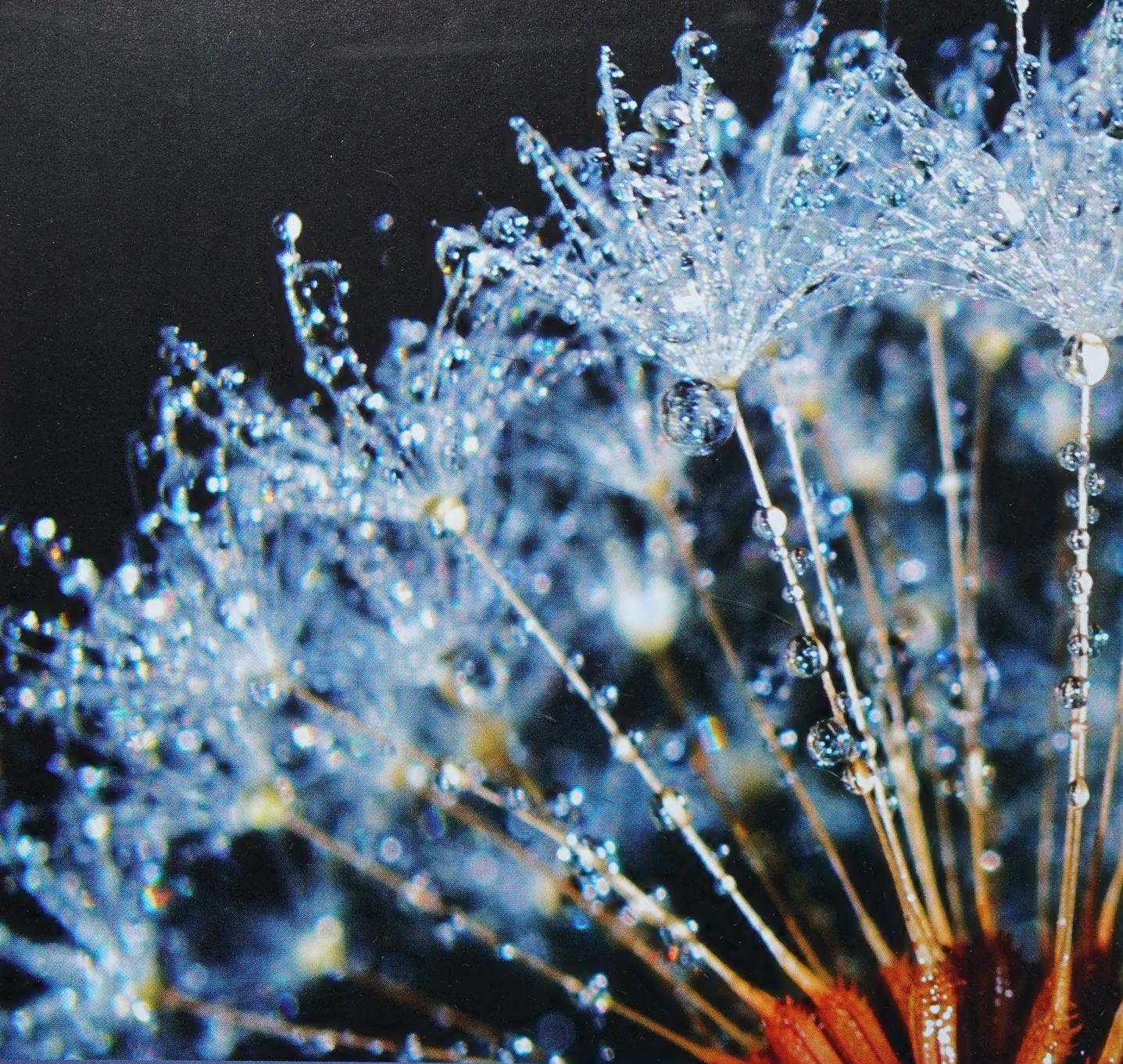
God bless,
Fr Charlie Kohlerman, CSC
Author: A Journey and Witness to Hope
Human Development. Fall 2104

"Congratulations on bringing Human Development back. It is a wonderful magazine and I have enjoyed reading it over the past years.
Thank you for years of thoroughly enjoyable reading and all the best for your re-launching of the magazine."

Yours truly,
Fr. Paul Browne, MSC
Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Australia

"Congratulations!
I've just finished reading your first issue of the "new" Human Development Magazine. The layout is attractive and format engaging. Particularly helpful is the structure of dialogue with writers and readers of varied backgrounds. Thank you for preserving this jewel of pastoral formation, and for your creative efforts in adapting it for the needs of today."

Fraternally,
Fr. William Myers, SM



BISHOPS ARE VITAL TO PRIESTS' WELL-BEING

PART ONE: HEALTHY AND HOLY LIVING IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Interview with Bishop Thomas Dowd



The following is an interview done by the editors of *Human Development* with Bishop Thomas Dowd, Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal. This interview is based on the talk given by Bishop Dowd at the Guest House Summer Leadership Conference held this past July 2014 in Naperville, Illinois. The Bishop's comments refer to the issues affecting priests and their Bishops but we feel it is just as relevant to religious communities of women and men and lay leadership serving in the Church today.

THE PRESBYTERIUM AS A LIVING BODY – Suggestions for Episcopal Leadership

HD: Can you tell us a little bit about who you are? I know you're the youngest bishop in North America, but could you talk to us about your faith journey and your spirituality?

BISHOP: As you mentioned, I am the youngest Bishop in North America, but not through any merit of my own. I am a Montreal'er, proud Montreal'er, born and raised. I was ordained as a priest for the Archdiocese of Montreal. I did all of my schooling here. I did my undergraduate studies in Commerce, International Business and Finance. I worked in the Telecom industry for a few years before entering the seminary. That experience has actually turned out to be a very important formative experience. It helped me get a good perspective on leadership, organization, and especially key concerns of secular life. So, I entered the seminary in Montreal and obtained various degrees through that experience and was ordained a priest for Montreal.

I did graduate work at the University of Montreal, which has a program in Ecclesiology. I wanted to apply what I learned about business and organization to the Church or see how those two things worked together, so I did study in ecclesiology, which is the discipline that most resembles that kind of secular business concern, at least in terms of organizational dynamics. From there, I have had various ministries in Montreal: Parish priest, hospital chaplain, and teaching at a university. I worked in the diocesan curia in the office for pastoral personnel and my particular responsibility was the welcoming of priests from other countries. So called "foreign-born" priests or "priests from outside," there are various titles we give that category. That was my main work. Montreal is a very cosmopolitan city and at any point we have about 80-100 priests in that category. The number may have risen slightly since I had that ministry.

My background in international business and especially in cross-cultural communication helped me tremendously. I was trained in getting people who came from different cultural backgrounds to be able to understand and work with each another. It turns out that cultural backgrounds aren't just cultural backgrounds. Cultural backgrounds can occur sociologically within the Church, for example. There are different perspectives on doctrines and liturgy, so how do you reconcile different points of view. People think they're opposing points of view but we have come to some common ground. That was my training and that is what I applied to my Church life and what I did as a priest.

At that time, I was in charge, very briefly, of our information and training services and to my great surprise, I got a call, in which the Pope invited me to be the Auxiliary Bishop for Montreal. That was in 2011. I was ordained a priest in 2001. I was a priest not even 10 years actually, so you can understand my surprise. As the Nuncio put it, when he announced the news, before I could get a word in edgewise, he said, "It is true that you are young, but this is a

defect that time will take care of on its own," so we had a good laugh. He asked if I'd accept it or not and I did, so here we are.

My particular appointment as auxiliary bishop is for the English-speaking sector of Montreal – it's the most significant minority in this very French-speaking city. Montreal is predominately French but there are about 500,000 people who speak English at home. That's the main language of their day-to-day life and half of those are probably Catholic, so 250,000. Thus it is like a diocese within a diocese.

HD: So you have a business, a faith perspective and a cross-cultural perspective. Quite interesting. How do you think these backgrounds have formed you and your faith?

BISHOP: I know myself one of the themes of my own spiritual life, and the Jesuits out there will be pleased to know, that this came out of an Ignatian Retreat. The result of that was one key word that has always been dwelling in my heart, the theme of Unity. For me, Unity is very important. The words of Christ, "Let them be one as you Father and I are one", or I think of the different words that Jesus says to us, "They will know that you are my disciples by the love that you have for each other." Those two phrases sound different but are basically saying the same thing. The same core concept and the same core reality is central to me; it is that unity that is supposed to be a hallmark of our life as Church. So, when I approached the question, when I was doing my thesis in Ecclesiology, it focused on unity, cross-cultural communication, the essential and core focus in unity. So, that's kind of a very important theme for me in my own spiritual life.

HD: Do you mind talking a little bit about your primary spiritual influences? How were you attracted to the priesthood?

BISHOP: In terms of attraction to the priesthood, that is simple. It was by getting to know priests. As a kid, I was lucky. I got to know the priests at the various parishes where I

had lived, and they all impressed me. I noticed they were very different from each other, but I could tell they were decent men who were there for us. That was very impressive. There's something about what they did for us that says, the notion that you can live your life and you don't have to live it for yourself, but live it for someone else, was made real and very concrete by seeing those priests. I have a lot of admiration and respect for them, and I don't know that they knew themselves the influence they were having, but they were having an enormous influence in my life. That was really the genesis of my spiritual life. Obviously, there is the call of God, but in terms of how it is heard or experienced, that was really the heart of my vocation. I never went on any vocational retreats or anything like that until I was already on my way to the seminary. So it's through those key priestly influences that I found my vocation

I grew up in Montreal in parishes that were bilingual, English and French. So we would alternate between having a priest who spoke French with an English accent or one that spoke English with a French accent and they were making a constant effort to take two linguistic communities and make them one parish. I saw that unity question and they modeled for me this unity question and the work it involves. It has to be done deliberately, but at the same time, it bears fruit because when you're living it, it's so much stronger.

In terms of just general background, the saints or models were certainly there. I think

The key word
that is dwelling
in my heart is
the word-unity.





immediately of Francis of Assisi. When I was a kid, I was very attracted to another key theme in my spiritual life which was authentic freedom. What does it mean to be free, not just free from, but free for? I always saw in Francis of Assisi a guy whose spirituality was one of radical obedience, and at the same time radical freedom. So, there's something very, very powerful about that. I think that's one of the reasons why Francis continues to attract so powerfully today. The Pope picked the name Francis, because he himself discerned there's something about the model of Francis of Assisi that is important for our world right now.

Later in my life, Saint John the Cross attracted me too with the heights of the spirituality that he proposes. When I was young, I tried reading John of the Cross and couldn't understand a word of it. Someone told me there's a certain time in your life that you'll understand John of the Cross. One day I was in a retreat center, kind of grappling with a few issues in my life, including my spiritual life, and I saw John the Cross on the bookshelf in the library. I picked it up and it was as clear as water. So, John of the Cross has also been a close spiritual guide and friend.

HD: Can you discuss the title of this talk and discuss why it's important to talk about the Presbyterium, as the "Living Body?"

BISHOP:

Why this talk? Why this subject? It's obviously dear to my heart because it touches on the theme of unity, but in a more practical way. It's also being demonstrated that the relationship with the bishop for priests is the most

significant relational factor that correlates with priestly happiness. That is somewhat startling. I think for some people, and yet, it is true, that is a factor for priests. In many cases, they don't necessarily want to be hanging out with the bishop every weekend, but they want to know that they have a healthy relationship with the bishop. It seems essential that the bishop knows them, cares for them, supports them, and so if that's the case, then we need to understand the nature of that relationship.

This certainly has a human quality and a theological content so this was really the purpose of my talk. Given my background, using a social science, like business and a theological science like ecclesiology and the practical experience of building unity, I believe the importance of this relationship on those levels comes together naturally. I am attempting to explain an integrated vision. This was and is my hope in sharing this with so many at the conference and in this interview.

HD: Do you want to talk a little about the significance of, first of all, the relationship of the bishop with the priest and how that correlates with his well-being/happiness and how this relates to the other aspects of his health?

BISHOP: Father Steven Rossetti identifies in his book "Why Priests are Happy," a number of factors that correlate with priestly happiness and some of those factors are, I guess you'd call them vertical factors, about a priest's relationship with God, the quality of his prayer life and so on. Some of them are more horizontal, the human relationship factors.

Significant research finds that Bishops – and the type of relationships that they have with their priests- are vital to the health, happiness and well-being of their priests.

The second most significant is the sense of feeling lonely or unappreciated. Obviously that is a negative correlation. The more you have that, the less you're happy. Third is obedience to religious authority. How does a person understand obedience and what is his relationship to his superior? Fourth, is the support that priests offer each other and fifth is having close friends.

Now, when I say, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, that is in order of importance. Again, that may seem a bit surprising. I think it's not surprising if people are saying they are lonely and unappreciated that they are going to be unhappy, but I think that's pretty obvious. I think the idea of having close friends, either in the priesthood or the outside of it, is really only number 5 on the list. You'd think that that would be higher, that obedience to religious authority ranks higher than the support priests gives to each other where it's not a relationship of obedience, but a fraternal relationship. This is revealing certain dynamics that I think we all knew that were there but we may not have realized the order of importance of them So to have a relationship with the bishop as number 1 is, I think, a significant discovery, and one that we have to pay attention to. We can't just say if that's not going well, just sit back and say "Well, they'll support each other," and think that's good enough. It's just not going to be good enough.

HD:Are you really challenging both priests and bishops to take a serious look at this new data?

BISHOP:Yes, absolutely! Take it seriously. And I'm challenging, but I'm hoping that in my

talk that there's both an offer of insight that can help move this relationship forward.

HD:While you were visiting a bishop in India you had an image that struck you, do you want to talk about that image?

BISHOP:Yes, the Bishop of Eluru is in the state of Andhra. He has more years of experience than I do in priesthood but he was ordained more recently than me as a bishop, and so while I was visiting with him, he asked me, "Do you have any advice to offer me?" I thought, I've been a bishop for two and half years and I'm giving him advice? But the thing that leapt to my mind was this idea of unity in the priesthood So I said "there's one thing you want to be able to do, this one favor you want to do yourself, be united with your priests. Build unity among your priests."

I used this image and said "Two oxen can pull a cart farther than ten elephants if the oxen are pulling in the same direction and the elephants are pulling in all directions." I used those animals because that's what you see in India, but he got it right away. The bottom line is that it is all so true. If the forces are opposing each other, they're not going to be strong together. They may just cause damage, hurt themselves, others and tear things apart. If you're pulling together –just those two tiny oxen- in the same direction, you can get a lot farther than all of those big elephants.

HD: Do you want to delineate on the concept of what you mean by a "Presbyterium" or as we say in the States a "Presbyterate," or what do you mean by a Presbyterium?

BISHOP: I know in the states the term Presbyterate is used more frequently. Here in Montreal, we tend to use the word Presbyterium, simply because in French they use the Latin term more frequently and most of us were educated in French. Presbyterate or Presbyterium is the body of priests in a particular Church with the Bishop at the center. This is the key image to understand. This group can be delineated sociologically, it's a group and it has members. The idea is not just a club, or it's not just a category. It's a body. It's a body of priests of a particular Church with the Bishop at the center. The body has an inner life, it has an inner dynamic, it has its own unity, and it is a unity in diversity. The image of the body of Christ as St. Paul uses it, is really the classic model for understanding. It's a body that's united particularly in the Sacrament of Orders, the Presbyterate. You can study it psychologically, sociologically, canonically, and it also has to be understood theologically.

It is a spiritual and theological reality. Now, I use the term Presbyterate in the strict sense. It means the body of priests of a particular Church, most notably at a diocese with a Bishop at the center, but there are ways that you can extend that definition. You don't want to use it at its core but by analogy. You could use the term or you could use the insights from what the term means as a parallel. For example, the relationship between a group of religious and their superior, assuming that the group is also a theological reality and is meant to be living out that same unity in diversity. Without actually being a Presbyterate necessarily, it is going to have similar characteristics and probably similar dynamics.

Within a diocese, although the core group is the Bishop and his priests, by extension you can also look at the Bishop and the relationship with other mandated ministers, ordained ministers such as deacons and lay persons who have a special mandate from the bishop, to undertake pastoral ministry in union with the Bishop's own mission. So you can extend the insights from this definition to larger groups. But the reason you can do that is because you have a core definition in the first place. The core theological reality is the unity of the priesthood, the unity of the priests themselves with the bishop with the unity of the priesthood they share.

HD: it seems quite analogous to the priest as pastor in a parish community, as shepherd or to the religious with her or his superiors, and members of the religious communities and their members, is that right?

BISHOP: Again, the theology of unity and, I guess more precisely, a theology of communion, "What does it mean to live in communion." You can live in unity but have unity imposed. You can define unity as an external unity but you can't define communion as a purely external unity. Communion involves an investment of the heart and so the priests, with their bishop and the Presbyterate as a communion and as a body living in communion, is a very powerful image, and I think it serves as a prototype for understanding the communion of the Church, or the Church understood as a communion, the Church as a whole.

The Presbyterium is founded on the Sacrament of Orders and the shared priesthood, but the

The Presbyterate is the body of priests in a particular Church with the Bishop at the center- this image comes from Saint Paul who uses this rich image of - the Body of Christ.

big question is “Why is it part of the Lord’s will that the bishop and the priest be called to live this dynamic communion in that special way?” Why not just say it’s just another expression of unity in general? What’s so special about this? I think it’s because, first of all, the bishop and priest, in their communion can serve as a prototype for the communion of the Church as a whole. They also serve as a living example for the exchange of gifts that is meant to characterize the Church when it’s being lived in full unity. You can achieve unity by forcing everyone to be like everyone else. We all wear the same uniform, march to the same tune, yes that’s unity, but that is unity through uniformity. That’s not the model that St. Paul presents in the New Testament. To have this unity in diversity, this is more challenging. To have that type of unity, you need to find a way that the gifts of each are enriching everyone. Really, the theology of unity, communion, Presbyterate, is a theology of gifts.

HD: Do you want to talk about the theology of gifts a bit more?

BISHOP: In Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church from Vatican II, there’s a very important statement about the nature of the gifts that the Holy Spirit distributes to the Church. There are the hierarchical gifts and there are charismatic gifts and the fact that those two categories are mentioned is significant. Lumen Gentium developed the presentation of the hierarchical gifts and later on, in the section entitled, “The Church is Hierarchical”. Clearly it’s talking about the hierarchical gifts, and those are the gifts found in the Sacrament of Orders: Episcopate, Presbyterate, Diaconate, Priests, Deacons, Bishops.

But there are also the charismatic gifts, which are freely given and essentially rooted in the sacrament of baptism. When a person is an ordained priest, we have to remember they are still baptized. We have this distinction in Canon Law, the distinction between a cleric and a layperson. When you are a cleric you are not a layperson and when you are a layperson

you are not a cleric. They’re mutually exclusive terms. This is okay for canon law, but in terms of the theology of gifts we have to look at baptized and ordained. Not layperson and cleric. The distinction is that when you get ordained, you don’t stop being baptized. They are not mutually exclusive categories.

In fact, each is, in some way, certainly the ordained ministry is ordered towards the life and action of the baptized faithful, which includes them, but it’s ordered towards that, so the analogy I like to use to express this is a lively one. I’d like us to think of the analogy of the skeleton and muscles. If you’re looking at the body, then the part that makes the body move is the muscle. That’s the charismatic gifts. There are so many different kinds of muscles in the body of various sizes and different functions. Some transfer power to the body. Others give stability, but all of those muscles are what make it move. On the other hand, the skeleton doesn’t make it move, it gives structure to the muscles. It even provides resistance to the muscles, but that is so the muscles can give greater leverage, therefore their power is multiplied.

So if you look at the hierarchical gifts, those are the gifts that give the Church structure. The hierarchy is baptized, so they also bring their charismatic gifts, but the ordination they received is not merely to give structure to their own personal charismatic gifts but to everybody’s charismatic gifts. So they act as the skeleton within the body in order to allow all of the faithful, all the baptized, to be able to exercise and show their gifts.

I love the word exercise when we’re talking about muscles, but to be able to exercise their gifts for the sake of, well, the salvation of the world basically. So, you need to have both. If you’ve got a body that is muscles with no skeleton, it’s not going to get very far. There are certain sea creatures like that, but we’re on land, most of the time. You’re not going to get very far, if your skeleton is not working properly. Try walking with a broken leg. If there’s something wrong with the skeleton, the

muscles cannot use their power. On the other hand, if you have only got the skeleton, you are dead - you are just dry bones! Or if your muscles are atrophied, then your skeleton is not going to help that much either. You need both. This is an extremely important insight because it will help us, for example, with clericalism.

HD: What is the significance of this image in regards to clericalism?

BISHOP: Basically, clericalism has a very obvious negative side, which is a kind of arrogance that can set in among clerics that they are somehow superior to others, rather than seeing their calling and their gift as a form of service. I call that the "skeleton" becoming an "exoskeleton." We become like a crab, where we're still providing structure to the body, but it's very hard and cold and it's tough on the outside. In order for the body to grow, it needs to shed its exoskeleton and go through periods of tremendous vulnerability.

If we're living clericalism instead of proper "skeletal" hierachal gifts, than the Church will benefit from the structure that the skeleton gives, but it's going to go through periods of tremendous vulnerability as it needs to shed that in order to be able to grow. This is just God's will. If God wants the Church to grow, and the Church is living only as this skeletal being, the hierachal gifts are seen as only the exoskeleton, then, we're going to have periods of crisis. This is part and parcel of our history.

HD: Do you think we're going through that now with certain parts of the Presbyterate who are clinging to an old form of clericalism?

BISHOP: I think the temptation will always be there, because one advantage that the exoskeleton gives is a sense of security. If you're wearing armor, than you don't worry about people beating you up as much. I don't want to judge those whose perspective on the hierachal gifts has become an exoskeleton, because it's probably already happened internally. It might be subconscious and it's probably a base for self-protection for

these men.

HD: Do you think this is a result of the sexual abuse scandals and the fractured relationship of Bishop and priest?

BISHOP: No. I think this has been the pattern prior to any revelation of sexual abuse scandals. I think, obviously, if a person is behaving in an arrogant manner, who thinks that because he has been ordained that he is superior, you're going to be prone to sins against charity. There's another sign or manifestation of clericalism, which is the clericalism that comes from the laity. This is the perspective that there seems to be among some people, the perspective that the priests must possess all of the gifts. The priest has to be a fantastic preacher. He has to be a fantastic administrator, tough with people, tough but kind and gentle with the people who are vulnerable. In a sense, he needs to be a missionary but he also has to make sure he will be home enough. He has to be everything. I know Saint Paul, be all things to all people, but I don't think that Paul thinks that to be all things to all people simultaneously all the time. It's unrealistic.

We have a synod here in Montreal and there was a big discussion regarding the role of the laity and the life of the Church and also there was a big discussion on the training of future priests and the various groups, small groups that at mass were contributing suggestions to the Synod and had contributed many different suggestions for the training of the priests. As they were being read out, everybody was sitting there going "This is great, this is terrific!" Until the archbishop stood and said, "There's just one small problem. If we actually implement all of these things, it'll take fifteen years before somebody gets ordained." "Are we really saying that every priest needs to have all of these particular skills?"

And in my own life, I have met priests who are fantastic preachers but they're very nervous, or they just don't feel it's their gift going and visiting the sick in the hospital. It's something



that they're really not comfortable with. On the other hand, I know priests who are fantastic hospital chaplains, just fantastic. If you are dying, you want him to be the guy at your bedside helping prepare you for your final journey. But when it comes to preaching, they can't preach their way out of a paper bag. It's a variety of gifts.

I think that one of the reasons the Lord has willed that there be a special unity between the bishop and the priests in the Presbyterate, specifically within the Presbyterate, is because Christ wants to be present to his church in the sacraments, but also in ministry and so the bishop, he's the vicar of Christ as Lumen Gentium said, he possesses the fullness of the sacrament of orders, the fullness of the hierarchical gifts that Christ has left, but he doesn't possess the fullness of all the charismatic gifts. There is no bishop who possesses all of them either.

But with his priests, in that unity, they can form a kind of Collective Christ and so within the Presbyterate, as people approach the Presbyterate, they can find the hierachal gifts.

They can also find the charismatic gifts being lived in unity with the hierachal gifts and their own charismatic gifts can then sort of plug into that reality. They can attach to that and the body grows. So this means that the unity of the Presbyterate and the communion of the Presbyterate, both effectively and affectively, that communion doesn't just serve as a distant model, a distant prototype. It serves as a living prototype; the core for the greater unity is an effective and affective quality of the local Church as a whole.

But, how might this happen, if people sort of sit back and go, "Father will take care of it" or "Father has got to have all of these gifts" or "I don't need to do all of this, that is why we have priests," sometimes even clericalism that can come from the laity as is seen when folks say, "it'll be taken care of by the ordained." You see it even is in ways that seem or are presumed to be good, excessive deference or not being able to "take a decision" (a Montreal expression, we "take a decision," we don't make them). Not being able to make a decision unless it's been referred up the ladder. I remember we were organizing a conference, and one of the items

Bishops – all Church leaders - need to be concerned with both the effective and the affective dimensions of their ministry of service.

on the agenda was how are the tables going to be laid out? I said, "Why are you coming to me with this"? They said, "We just wanted to run this by you bishop." But this idea that everything has to run by, or be run by me, is quite frankly unhealthy. Now, I suppose that is a reaction to other types of clericalism, but it's an unhealthy relationship pattern that we have to start to break. This model that I am proposing, serves as a mechanism to help us see what the alternative(s) might or could be for all of us: Bishop, priest, and layperson.

HD: You present or use a different model or image in regards to what the body of Christ would look like, what the Presbyterate might look like as a body. Do you want to talk about that?

BISHOP: I think, perhaps what you're referring to is the all of the cells of the body. If we're talking about the Presbyterate as a body and we're not just using it as a nice word but we seriously want to look at the Presbyterate as a living organism, as a living spiritual organism, than each of the members of that body are a bit like cells in the physical body.

The Presbyterate, our body's cells, come into being, they live, they die and are replaced by others. There's a constant "renewal factor" that is happening within the body itself as those cells are replaced. So, too it is with the Presbyterate, as a whole it is also going through that kind of constant renewal. You will have newly ordained priests coming into the body, you'll have priests exercising their ministry, some priests that fall sick that have difficulties of various sorts that hamper their ministry, that's a part of the body that's not doing too well. You'll have priests pass away and die. That's part of the body that's left and the body as a whole. You can measure it, the very health of a Presbyterate. If you're looking at a truly living body in that sense, then there should be ways to measure the health of a Presbyterate and just as the human body is composed of different systems: the nervous, circulatory, and respiratory system. You can look at the different categories of priests within

a Presbyteriate as different systems; each has functions as their own cells.

They tend to be part of certain kinds of functions, or certain kinds of contributions of the life of the Presbyterate, so you can start to analyze what is the healthy aspect of the body in a more systematic way by breaking it down into those categories. It's possible by doing that, for the leader, the bishop, to ask the question "What is necessary for the health of this and that part?" What's necessary for the health of the stomach is not necessarily for the health of the heart. So you can start to break it down and analyze the health of each and that helps to contribute to the health of the whole.

HD: Can you discuss how this nurtures each of the gifts of various stages of the priest's life, or even a religious' life, or lay person's life and how it mirrors the full life cycle of human development. What are you suggesting here?

BISHOP: One difference is that I think there are different life cycle categories for each individual priest, but there are also life cycle categories for the Presbyterate, as a whole. For example, if you have a priest who has 25 years of experience, but is just off the plane from India, he is actually at the initial point of his place in the Presbyterate life cycle. He's at a very different point in his own vocational journey. In terms of where he's at in being integrated as a new cell into the body, called the local Presbyterate. He arrives and he doesn't know anybody. He may not know what the particular practices are in a certain country or diocese. In many ways, he's a neophyte again.

So, the kind of ministry that we're going to have in order to, if we want to have a healthy Presbyteriate, would be one of the life cycle categories in initial entry. That's going to have to be for seminarians, and guys in their internship, but it's also going to have to be for people coming in from the outside, regardless of how many years of priesthood they've got. So, initial entry also applies to recently ordained priests, because they're still testing their formation at that point.

HD: It seems as though you seem to have five different types of life cycle categories, the initial entry being the first. Do you want to talk about the stages of a "ministerial life cycle?"

BISHOP: The life cycle categories that we generally look at with a small advisory group that I meet with to look at the whole question of the health and life of our Presbyterate, and these are the life cycle categories that we kind of fuse together to see what are we doing, and the effects, and how we can improve and bring this to even greater health.

Just as an aside, health is just not in the absence of sickness. You cannot be sick but it doesn't mean you're going to be running the marathon either. So, if we're going to be having excellence so that people can look at us and say, "See how they love one another," than there is an effort that needs to happen, a kind of intentional loving. The life cycle category can help us live that communion intentionally.

These categories are fairly obvious: 1. Initial entry. 2. Active ministry, this means, a phase where priests are active. They have active mandates from the diocesan bishop, and they are exercising those mandates, whatever it might be, parish ministry, hospital ministry, and so on. Then there are the third category of priests that simply aren't well. For whatever reason, and they may still have a mandate, but it might be more of a mandate on paper or a significantly reduced mandate. They may have physical illness, some kind of psychological disturbance that they're struggling with, a spiritual crisis that came along, so in the image of the body, they are part of the body that needs special attention.

Fourthly, you have retired priests who often are not in active ministry but they are not unwell either, they're simply retired, or perhaps slowing down due to age, and they are still part of the body and they still have a contribution to make and they also still deserve care adapted to their particular circumstances. Finally, you have priests who have left the particular Presbyteriate, called Alumni priests. If you have for example, religious who have served in

a particular Presbyterate for a time and then they have been called away by their community to serve elsewhere, the fact that they're gone doesn't mean that they are forgotten. It is the same thing with missionary priests who come in and return to their home diocese. Deceased priests, something we may not think about, but when we die, we're not really dead. We've gone to the Lord, but if the Presbyterate is really a prototype as a Church and the Church includes the Church penitent and the Church triumphant, then we need to consider our deceased brother priests. Obviously, we're not going to be calling them up on the phone but we have to consider how their memory is being honored and how we are praying for them. This is part of the health of the Presbyterate, if the Presbyterate really is a theological and spiritual reality.

I think there is one element that is an interesting test case for us to sit with for some time. It might allow us to see how the Presbyterate is being considered and is it healthy internally and externally: Are we looking at all of our structures that we put in place to support our priests? If those guys are forgotten, maybe we are approaching this a bit too humanistically. As an example, we have an annual day in November where we gather and pray for the priests who have recently deceased. We have the necrology that goes out so everyone knows the anniversary of the death of the various priests and we are invited to pray for those guys on those days and I find that very healthy. I think for men, in a particular way, the question of legacy is very important so to know that what we have done has an impact and a legacy is encouraging for the living.

HD: Can you explain what you see as essential features of support and of that sort of binding force?

BISHOP: I think the wellness of the body known as the Presbyterate, the wellness of the body, is tied to the intentional nurturing of these life cycle categories. Like I said earlier, health is not just the absence of illness. If you want to be really healthy you have

to intentionally nurture the gift of health you already have. There are certain natural relationships that exist among members of the Presbyterate. If you have a group of priests who are all part of the same religious community, or a group of priests who are all from the same country, they will probably tend to hang out and understand each other better. If you have a group of priests who were in the same class or went to the same seminary, they'll have the same natural relations or natural affinity. We have to take that, that's good and that's the basics of health. We have to bring it into the super healthy, bring it to the fullness of health.

This requires great and effective charity, that's the ultimate uniting force. The binding force of the body is love. That is the ultimate binding force for the body of Christ, and it's the bonding force for the Presbyterate. This is love understood, as emotion, certainly affective. It is also love, and the best love is love of choice. That's adapting, that is the love that is intentional and so it is lived. It also can be lived affectively, but possibly, it also has an effective dimension, in other words the choices that we make to love, nurtures someone else's affective life and it also nurtures their life in an effective manner, and makes their life better.

So if the members of the body, each with their own gifts, are able to place their gifts at the service of each other and if that service is done in love, then you have a body that is extremely strong and is one which doesn't need to fall into unhealthy patterns of self-protection. It helps us to avoid things like the exoskeleton and excessive clericalism, or sometimes just bad behaviors or false consolations.

HD: Let's talk more about those effective supports that you see as central, and I guess it really answers the question of how we as religious or priests, or parishioners, how we pull together – but mentioning specifically, and staying focused on the Presbyterium, what would be the expressions of effective support look like?

BISHOP: I think the effective support can be

sort of our grid for analyzing. It comes from looking at those life cycle categories. The encouragement of vocations for example, not just talking about priests in seminary, how are they understood as being already, almost by anticipation, members of the Presbyterate. Here in Montreal, our seminarians get invited to all of our priest gatherings. We are fortunate our seminary is located in the city, within the diocese, and it's easy enough to get to events and so they're invited to the various gatherings of the Presbyterate. We're happy to see them and we welcome them and we know their names. I can tell you as a seminarian that was very encouraging to me. To know that I'm not just joining a corporation, I'm joining a brotherhood, something bigger than me, was very important for understanding my vocation. How are we with recruitment and how are we able to encourage that? I think maybe that's more of a sign of the health of our Presbyterate and a contributing factor but I suspect the two go hand in hand. Grumpy priests have a hard time recruiting. If on the other hand you have guys that are able to say that priesthood has been challenging, but if they had to do it all over again, here are the reasons they love their priesthood. That would be such a powerful witness. The best recruitment tool you'll have is just such witness.

HD: So often we think of illness as a contagion but don't you also think that happiness equally can also be a contagion and can have something very contagious and attractive to it?

BISHOP: We see it all of the time, that's why advertisers are trying to usurp, in a sense, the natural word of mouth in social media. They want it to go "viral." "Viral" usually means you're getting an illness. They want it to go viral because it's the virility of "hey check this out, this is good" that's also something that is an important factor.

Now getting back to the mechanisms of effective support, the encouragement of vocations, and meaning encouraging people to choose to accept the calling but also encouraging that ministry of encouragement

This model of leadership is appropriate for any religious leader in the Church today.

to those in seminary. For those that are newly arrived, already ordained in a particular Presbyterate, what are our integration tools for them and how are we giving them the sense of welcome? How are they getting integrated into not just the ministry, but into the Presbyterate as a whole?

One project we're working on here in Montreal is to have a priest yearbook. A photo and a brief bio of every priest so that when a guy comes in from another country we can say "here are your brothers." All the current members of the Presbyterate can quickly get to know certain basics. It'll include a fun bio and things like "here's what I'd like you to know about me", or "when you meet me, ask me about this." We have one priest who loves sailing – "when you meet me, ask me about sailing" and you know that's what is going to get him talking. We can't say who's going to be friends with whom, but we can help people to be friendly by removing barriers and helping the integration proceed more quickly. So there's functional integration, ministry, practical tools, policies, but also simply unity of charity. You can have tools that help give a leg up to that process. For the newly ordained, they're still in the initial entry category and mentorship for them is crucial. So many studies show that the first five years of priesthood are critical, so how are we being intentional about those first five years and how are we mentoring those who are in their new experiences of priesthood?

For those who have active mandates, that's the second life cycle category. These are priests who

are engaged using their gifts and their talents in their vocation and their mission for the sake of the kingdom. They don't want to feel like they've been forgotten. They don't want to feel like "is what I'm doing really worth it?" To be able to work with them, continuing formation is very important. It shows that we're investing in them and in their ministry. Also, in this category is respectful remuneration. Remuneration - the worker deserves his wages. That's the basic scriptural principle, so the priest should not necessarily be given a salary that is a standard of secular success. You must consider the level of education we have and to translate that into the secular world. If I had an MBA instead of a Masters of Pastoral Theology, in the secular world, I could be making a lot of money. It's not a question of money; it's a question of having a level of remuneration that allows a person to have a decent lifestyle to be able to support one's self. It is to be able to have this in a way that they are not preoccupied with worry.

For example, if you have retired priests, they need to know the pension plan that's going to support them. Insurance plans are a part of remuneration, they need to know that they're going to have support if they fall sick, or need special care. Very often the remuneration package includes a place to live, not cash. It's the physical location to live. We had one parish where the water wasn't drinkable. It was brown coming out of the tap and so obviously the maintenance hadn't been done properly in years and we had to make sure that it was. When our brother priests went there, they needed to know that we were going to take care



of these problems, not to say, "Well, it's your house, you take care of it." That's not respectful. So, how are we offering remuneration in a way that is respectful and is a sign of concrete support for the person?

HD: You've also mentioned the importance of having priests gather together regularly and really seeking out and supporting those sorts of gatherings. Do you want to talk about what that would look like?

BISHOP: The gathering of priests, for various reasons is important, whether it is for business, celebrations, or jubilees. I can't put my finger on it but there's something magical that happens when priests get together. They feel a certain freedom that comes from being with each other and being able to share with each other. They're able to look at each other and say, "We know each other." That recognition, that mutual acknowledgement is very powerful. It's not just among priests. I think you'd experience that if you travel in a foreign country and you're surrounded by people that don't speak English and you don't understand – with different food, a different way of life, and what happens then when you meet someone from your own home country. You get some news from your own home; you get to speak English or French, or whatever it is. It acts as an oasis for a certain time so that we can then plunge back into our daily realities. So, those kinds of oases can happen when priests gather together. Most priests, when they gather, want a reason to come together. They want to have some practical purpose, but there has to be a balance of the practical and the fraternal. The gatherings of priests become their own reasons for being, precisely because they're moments when the body itself must come together as one body.

HD: Can you comment on why it is important you include the retired priests in these gatherings?

BISHOP: Absolutely. For a Jubilee we had, for example, some alumni, and one of our priests

who retired and is living in another city about a three hour's drive away still gets the emails. He's consulted when we're doing a project and we want to get priests' opinions. I remember him saying to me "I appreciate being consulted" and I said, "You're a man of wisdom with all of this experience, why wouldn't I consult you?" He came to the barbecue, in part because he wanted to support one of the jubilarians who was a close friend of his. Again, we're operating on a purely functional level with the guys who are retired. When corporate employees retire, they are retired, they don't bring them back. But, we're not a corporation. I mean, we're a theological reality that includes people who are dead. Surely we can include those who are retired.

HD: This model seems to have implications in regards to how assignments are made and how authority is exercised. Do you want to describe your vision for that?

BISHOP: In terms of making pastoral assignments, in my experience, the priests are very generous. They've taken a promise of obedience, and I think most of them meant it. But at the same time, they want to know and discuss how obedience is an interesting concept. Functionally, at its root, it means to listen. So if a parent says to a child, "you're not listening to me" what he means is, "you're not doing what I tell you." If on the other hand the child says to the parent "you're not listening to me", it doesn't mean, "You're not doing what I tell you", but it means, "I want you to get my point of view." It's not necessarily a rejection of authority. So, pastoral assignments as a function of obedience is a two way street. The authority has the right to be obeyed but at the same time the person who's doing the obeying has a right to be listened to. So with you must be respectful. And respectful means you can't assign someone to a particular ministry as a form of punishment. You can't assign someone to a particular ministry as a form of exile. The kingdom of God is so huge and the needs are so great, surely there is something for everybody. Now, if a person



is really unwell and unable, then you'll give an assignment that is respectful of their particular level of health, with regard to his physical, psychological, spiritual health. Assignments, t need to be discerned wisely. They do not have to be done just by the bishop himself. The bishop can get input from others, prudent input, because you don't want to feed into a gossip pattern or anything like that. There is a part of the respect that is the confidentiality dimension as the discernment is happening. I really believe that it's not a question of saying, "How can we tailor assignments to particular people?" Sometimes we have to ask someone to do something they don't want to do or we're not expecting, but the external needs of the people are there. I had a case with a priest in his mid-40's who had a stroke. He was a pastor of a huge parish and it happened just as we had concluded our pastoral assignment nomination round for the next September so I had to redo the process and had to ask some guys at the last minute to move and make changes. More than one said it was tough, it was startling, but to a man, if they see the need, They understand why you're asking and accept. They meant their promise of obedience; they understood. It's part of what I mean by respectful. Part of the pastoral assignments, I believe, is, to have stability. Now this is a personal preference, but because our ministry is a ministry of love, and love requires knowledge of the other. It's interesting how the bible uses the word knowledge as an expression of intimacy. You can't move priests around like pawns. Picking them up and moving them around. There may be times when changes happen more frequently, but as much as possible there should be stability in pastoral assignments. It gives

people a chance to settle in a role. It gives them a chance to use their gifts effectively and often they grow into their role in a way that they become more effective over time. It has to be monitored, but that's normal. I think there has to be an option for stability.

HD: Can you delineate some other forms of effective support in the exercise of authority?

BISHOP: I think the pertinent exercise of authority, is inclusion in decision-making. You're facing a particular issue, and maybe as bishop you think you have the answer, but it's good to be humble and just to say, "Well, maybe if there's greater wisdom out there." I have to tell you one of the advantages of being made a bishop after only 9 years of priesthood, is that you are very conscious you don't have all the answers. This is actually part of the blessing of being named bishop so young. May I keep that blessing as I gain experience!

I've heard more than one priest say to me, "I want to have my two cents; I want you to know that you understand my perspective." "You may decide differently and I will accept that but it would be easier for me to accept it if I know that you understand where I'm coming from." So, the listening process can't be sort of facile, and it can't just be for the sake of form. One way I often try and make that a reality is when I'm in a priest meeting and we're moving in a particular direction, I'll make reference to the person whose suggestion it was. Somebody will say, "Bishop, where's this coming from?" And I'll say, "I was out for coffee with Father so and so and he had this great idea", and so you give credit where credit is due, and that

Our ministry of leadership is a ministry of love; love requires attention, time and basic knowledge of the other to be effective.

becomes a mechanism that shows that there is genuine inclusion in the leadership process.

For priests who are not well, there's a question of active care for them. Making sure that for priests with addiction problems we send them to Guest House for treatment. For a person who is physically ill, we care for them as best we can or make sure they get care. I think one thing for priests, is that they want to know, that this fraternity means something and they're not going to fall through the cracks and that there's a net that will catch them if they fall.

Part of this acknowledgement of priests that I think is very important is being able to say, "Thank you". I gave the example of giving credit where credit is due as being very important. Just say thank you in honoring the priests. Perhaps if they're living for a jubilee, we're not just honoring the fact they've happened to stay alive for twenty-five years since ordination, but we're honoring the contribution they've made over that time. It may sound funny, but priests have a hard time receiving thanks.

If you were to say to a priest, "We would like to nominate you for a specific award," they'd say, "No, I don't want that." They may even refuse to receive it, and yet possibly there's an excessive humility there too, but the thanks from the leadership is important. A priest retires, a nice letter from the bishop saying "thank you so much". I've had so many priests tell me, "I got this lovely letter from the bishop", thanking them for something. Perhaps, because it's an intimate thing it's done better within the context within the Presbyterate

rather than in front of the whole world. I think priests would receive that better, or more easily, and it is so important. They don't do it for the thank you, but gosh it means a lot. I honestly don't know why it's so hard for people to say thank you. It's a good habit to have. For our retired priests, because as you get older, there can be a sense of insecurity. Illness, as well, contributes to that. For those that are retired, they want to know that they will be supported. Very often they don't have family, so their brotherhood is their support. They are retired, and they have the freedom of retirement and they should enjoy that, but we should also let them know and make sure they know that there is support in place for them.

In terms of the inclusive communication tools that you mentioned earlier, I think the advantage of modern communication, like the internet, is that it allows us to network our priests in a way that helps us to send information out and receive information back very easily. So, that is something we want to do. One of the first things I did when I got started in this job, is that I asked all the priests for their private cell phone number or voice mail number, and their private email. I said, "It's because if I want to send you something, I don't want it to go through the parish secretary and I want to know it's going to go straight to your eyes and I want to be able to leave a message that won't be picked up by someone else so that I can speak to you freely brother to brother." They understood that.

So, we created a little email list and it has a prefix every time an email goes through – Bishop Tom to the priest. When it pops up

in a priest's email, he sees it and he can put in a filter to make sure it doesn't wind up in his junk box by accident. The point is, it goes out and when the new priest comes into the diocese, he gets added to the list and it allows me to communicate for quick consultations and quick updates as to what's going on. Sadly, we had a situation where one of our permanent deacons was arrested and he was arrested on a Friday. The news media was starting to break the story Saturday morning. On Saturday afternoon, I phoned the priests of the neighboring parishes to let them know. In one case, I caught them ten minutes before their evening Mass. I also sent an email through the list. So many of our guys have email on their cell phone now that the message popped up and when the questions started to come from the people, "Father, did you hear about what's happening?" They were able to say, "Yes, I just got word." We kept people fully informed. But that includes not just the active priests, but also the alumni priests, and the retired priests. The communication tool acts as a mechanism to bind the priests together. And I've already mentioned remembering the deceased priests, part of thanking and honoring, but also praying for them. They are aware of their own faults too. They know we need prayer. This also is a source of that unity that I expressed before. As priests, this is our *raison d'être*; we can and need to tell each other that we are praying for you!

HD: Finally, you really talk about a different type of support, and I like these two distinctions of the effective support and affective support. Can you detail what you mean by affective support as a key component to building up the Presbyterate?

BISHOP: Both kinds of support are expressions of that love that needs to exist as the binding force in the Presbyterate. There are distinctions but they are united in the same, both forms of expression. In affective support, I'm referring to the support that has to come directly from the bishop. Going back to the very, very first point of the relationship with the bishop is a very important factor for the happiness of priests. You can delegate

the organization of the various services that I've described under the effective dimension. Effectively, you're looking at the life cycle of the priests as the members of the Presbyteriate and you're trying to support them in their elements of their life cycle. But organizing the barbecue, it's not the bishop who needs to organize the barbecue. He can delegate that too. Creating the right remuneration package, he can delegate that too. He exercises authority in making assignments. Often you have a Vicar for Clergy, whose job is to make the discernment and recommendations. A lot of that can be delegated, the "effective" stuff. But affectively, that can't be delegated.

The key principle here is that you can't delegate the task of loving to someone else. If you love somebody, you either love them yourself, or you don't love them. You can delegate certain ways that would be expressed in a more effective way. Like one of the ways parents love their children is by teaching them. You can delegate the task of teaching to a teacher but you can't actually delegate the love. You hope the teacher loves your kid, but you can't ask the teacher to love the kid in your place. You either love people or you don't. So, affective support is the kind of love that the bishop expresses personally. All the various effective forms of support really truly love forms, and they're not motivated simply by efficiency, or productivity. The effective elements can be delegated, but not the affective, so at the heart of this, the bishops have to, I think, show we care. To put in place habits of affective love, which is the same kind of thing we see in family life. Reading the kids a story at night before they go to bed is a form of affective support. But interestingly, not everyone is comfortable with this. I think a lot of people are comfortable with the effective but not the affective. I remembered discussing this with one bishop and when we started talking about the affective dimension he got a little agitated. He said, "What am I supposed to do, kiss them all good night?" That's not what I'm saying, but even just minimal expressions are very important. The little things count.

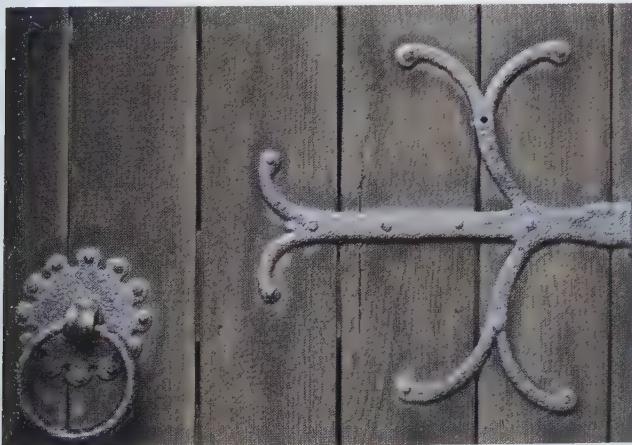
Call, write, send cards, and visit. It's important

to remember special days. Birthdays, anniversaries of ordination, and it's also very important to remember anniversaries of loss. And if you have 300 priests, have your secretary make a list but don't have her make the phone call. Make it part of your work routine. If you're late a couple days, call anyway. Belated birthday wishes are often understood and they appreciate the call. They know that our lives are crazy, but they like to know that they're being thought of and prayed for.

When I did a pilgrimage to Rome to the Tomb of St. Peter's, as part of the course for newly ordained bishops, I made a point to take a bunch of post cards and writing cards to the guys saying when I went to the tomb, I prayed especially for you, I was thinking of them in Rome, with a stamp from the Vatican on the postcard. You wouldn't believe the positive reaction I got from that. Some of the priests sent me cards in response saying "Thank you so much".

One important thing to pay attention to are the MIA's, Missing in Action. These are the guys who don't come to clergy gatherings. You offer ongoing formation; and they don't come to ongoing formation. Often they feel alienated for whatever reason and I think reaching out to them is important and it's also very appreciated. I have one retired priest who I've visited and he said, "Since I've moved into this home, I haven't had people visit me from the diocese or from the Presbyterate." Now, there are probably reasons there that I'm not aware of, but the bottom line is that he's an older guy,

The effective elements of leadership can be delegated, but a dynamic leader cannot delegate the affective ones.



who's a priest and feels kind of isolated in his priesthood. He doesn't want to be all chum my with everybody and wants to have relationships on his terms but to have that connection is important.

It is also important to pay attention to sources of anxiety for priests. When I find out that a priest's parent or sibling is sick, or someone in his family isn't well, I make a point of calling and seeing how they're doing. I then make a point for myself to make another call 2-3 weeks later. When a priest who isn't sick yet, but an x-ray found a shadow on his lung, I call in a couple weeks and ask how that's going. There's anxiety and you pay attention to the source of anxiety, and that's an expression that you care. You can delegate that but if you delegate that it gives the message, "I care because I'm going to have to know if I have to find someone to replace you while you're on sick leave." Not the message that "I care because it's you." So, those are the kinds of things that you have to do personally. It makes a big difference. Just the other day I was chatting with a priest. He had a very minor car accident a couple months ago, but had a bit of whiplash. I called him and he said he'd been in the hospital and had to go back for a checkup, so about the time when the checkup would have been done, I called again and he said "Yeah, everything is fine, and said "It's okay bishop, you don't have to call again". In other words, "buzz off". That's okay, a month later I called him and said "Listen, your retirement is going to be coming up and I'd like to meet with you so we can discuss the plans being developed for the presbyterial year to see if it can be adapted so you can be included." He says, "Oh, one more thing, I really appreciated that you called when I had my car accident." Now this is the guy that told me I didn't have to call anymore. Those things matter.

Well, as they say, paying attention to them, to the source of anxiety and paying attention to the MIA's is the core. Priests are a very autonomous independent lot. Really, you don't get far in this if you're not. So, I'm not worried about one of my priests turning into one of

those parishioners who will call you at 11pm at night. I'm not worried about that. I don't need to have the same kind of defensiveness with them for those things. And if I do, then that's a sign of something that's wrong with me and it's in many ways a good thing that's coming out.

Another example, about the exercise of authority – a young man sent a message on Facebook to 3-4 priests. He had a question about what is valid matter for the Eucharist, particularly the Eucharistic bread, because of a situation where apparently there's a priest who wants to use a home baked bread for Eucharistic bread, and so this young man was double-checking. Now, here's the thing, whatever answer you give, could very easily be interpreted as a judgment of the other priests, and your pastoral judgment. Is he using the right bread, the wrong bread? Etc., so I didn't answer right away. One of the priests who was put in that thread on Facebook did answer. Sadly, his answer was wrong, it was imprecise, and so I looked at this and thought, not only are we facing a situation where somebody asks for information and deserves an answer, but presents it in a way that doesn't turn into a club to beat the first guy on the head, but at the same time, the misinformation was out there. So, my first temptation was to write a correction, and then I thought to myself I should call the priest who wrote the answer and I said, "I think you forgot a detail. What you wrote was true but it's incomplete and that there's also this other information that would make your answer more precise."

I left the message on his voice mail. He called back saying "Thank you so much, for being cautious, in the French word, *delicatesse*. He said, "Thank you for your attention to that", and I said to him, "Do you want me to write the answer, or do you want to write the answer?" He said, "I'll write the answer." So, he's going to correct it himself to that guy, and I supplied him with the information to do it. Now, he has the responsibility to actually do it now, and if he doesn't I'll call him up and tell him that one of us will have to give an answer. It's a way



of showing support and saying okay, we're in this together, and how are we going to give the correct answer to this question in a way that the truth gets out there but also the truth will build up in love.

HD: One final point I think is pretty startling to me, and seems obvious, about how priests need to care and support each other. Do you want to explain why that's important and how that might be expressed?

BISHOP: Well, I don't want what I've been talking about to come across as overly critical, for example of my brother bishops, because I think frankly, all bishops were priests first and among priests we're not always that great at being intentionally and affectively supportive of each other. The natural bonds: of we're from the same town, or we studied at the same seminary, we're friends, those natural bonds are great, but if we're going to be living charity intentionally, then priests have to make sure they support each other intentionally as well.

That is a habit to be learned and exercised. We're not always good at it.

When a priest falls ill, how many brother priests go visit him in the hospital? The priest retired, I first mentioned earlier, who said that nobody goes to see him, well okay, why not? Now, there may be history there that I'm unaware of but "forgive our trespassers as we forgive those who trespass against us." Our charity has to include hearts and wounds and recognize the vulnerability of the other. So, those are habits we have to learn. I've mentioned the permanent deacon who was arrested. That was crushing, as you can imagine for the parish, and for the pastor, who counted on him, so I made a point to tell the priest, "Pay attention." When I visit with an ill priest, or he's not doing too well, I always ask him, "Do you want me to let the brother priests know?" Sometimes they don't, but sometimes they do and when I do I send a message saying, "Here's his phone number and email, call him and reach out." Sometimes it happens and

The Lord blessed me by putting my back to the wall and saying, “you have to do this.” Seeing the fruits of this and the continuous growth of those fruits is a source of hope. Bottom line, this stuff makes sense and it works. This is a great source of hope.

sometimes it doesn't. It's good that the relationship with the bishop may be positive, hopefully it is, but we have to model this mutual care as well, not just vertically bishop to priest. It has to be horizontally, priests with each other and intentionally as such. So, part of my goal now is to also help build these tools to help. For example, reminding people or letting them know when someone is sick and reminding them to reach out to someone, it's a tool to help the guys support each other. Mutual sharing of information is important but we need to develop those habits and I would even say, “What is the care of the priest for their bishop?” “How many phone calls does the bishop get on his birthday?”

HD: So, if this is to be true charity and true companionship, it must be expressed in a mutual manner then?

BISHOP: It has to be. I would even say this is the same for bishops with each other. We are even more isolated from each other because of the distance from one diocese to another. We had a situation in Canada where one of our bishops wound up in a controversy with the local government. It made the national news. I made the point of calling him and said, “Hi, listen, you're all over the news and there are a lot of people who disagree with the Church and what you're upholding and I want to let you know that I've got your back and that I'm supporting you.” He said, “Thank you very much”. When it hit the news again a couple months later I followed up with another message. He never called me back, which is fine, but I thought, well, this must be it. When I saw him at the last plenary he said, “Thanks for calling and leaving that message. I'm sorry I didn't call you back because I got busy, but it meant a lot and don't stop doing that.” Bishops need to show support with each other. This is important too.

HD: In conclusion, what gives you your greatest source of hope, what is your greatest source of hope for religious communities, for Presbyterate, for the Church?

BISHOP: What is my greatest source of hope? I really believe all that we have been discussing is so core, so important when it's lived, as you said, it's

so obvious. It may not seem obvious but once you start to live it, you ask yourself, "How did we not ever live this?" So, the habits become contagious themselves, the fruits of it, not a bit like exercise. Sometimes we sign up for a gym and we go for a couple of weeks and then we don't. We have to learn the habit of intentionality in order to come to terms with the fullest sense of wellness. Once you are healthy, once you've not just done the exercise but you've started to reap the fruits of it - of the wellness and the health that it brings, you don't want to go back to the old unhealthy ways.

So, for me there's an inner dynamic of love, which you know, sin is always trying to disrupt and we're always going to have to recognize that. You can't get too comfortable, but for me, having tried to live these principles, again, being the young bishop, the guy for whom the vast majority

of the priests in your Presbyteriate have more experience than you and now you're the guy with authority over them, I don't want to make it sound like developing these habits as having a particular virtue for me, in some ways it was desperation, but I had no other choice.

I mean, it was this or flop at the job. What I found is that the Lord blessed me by putting my back to the wall and saying "You have to do this." Seeing the fruits of it and the continuous growth of those fruits is for me a source of great hope. Bottom line, I'm hopeful because this stuff makes sense and it works. It can be a source of hope, I think, for the Church as a whole and that's why I was very happy to share this vision in my talk at the conference.

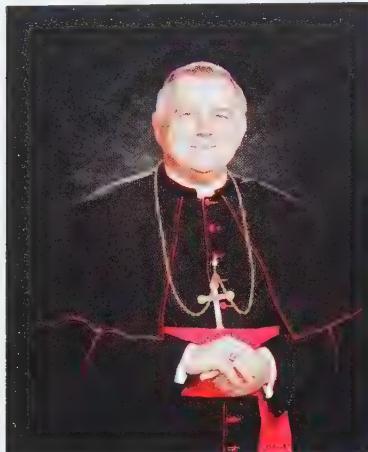
Look forward to Part Two of this Interview in the next Spring 2015 Edition.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Bishop Thomas Dowd was born in Montreal and ordained a priest on Dec. 7, 2001. Following his theological studies at the Grand Seminary of Montreal, he did pastoral work, from 2001 to 2005, in the Montreal parishes of Holy Name of Jesus, Saint Thomas à Becket and Saint Luke. From 2005 to 2006, he served as chaplain at Lakeshore General Hospital. From 2006 to 2011, he was associate director of the Office for Pastoral Personnel. In September 2010, he was named director of formation for the Archdiocese of Montreal. Bishop Dowd was ordained a Bishop on September 10, 2011, making him the youngest Bishop in North America. Bishop Dowd assists Archbishop Christian Lépine in the tasks of governance and the teaching of the faith in the second-largest diocese in Canada.

IN MY OPINION



The interview with Bishop Thomas Dowd, auxiliary Bishop of Montreal, is wide ranging excursus in what could be called a “practical ecclesiology” in which elements of unity and diversity must coexist

in a dynamic tension - among the clergy and members of consecrated life as well as among the laity as well.

This, of course, has been the challenge of the Church since her very beginnings. The first Council that took place in Jerusalem as that was presided by St. Peter set course for the Church. In determining that Gentile converts were not to be obliged to follow Mosaic Law, the early Church opted to be truly Catholic - which she could only be if she was to respond faithfully to the Master’s Great Commission to be the gospel “ad gentes”.

In the Church we are united in one body - not because we share the same language, cultural or linguistic heritage or racial and ethnic characteristics. We are one body because we share Christ: that is, we have one faith, one baptism, one Lord. We are saved by faith in Christ and not by adherence to Mosaic Law. Thus, in a Church that would claim to be “catholic”, that is “universal”, to be follow Christ one does not have to change his or her language, culture, or - if this were even possible - one’s race; to follow Christ, one only must change his or her heart.

Of course, unity in diversity is for a Church made up of a fallen (yet redeemed) humanity both a

gift and a task. In the early Church as we read in the Acts of the Apostles the Greek speaking converts complained that their widows were being neglected as opposed to the widows of the Hebrew speaking Christians. The Church showed great creativity in responding to this challenge (a creativity that comes from the Spirit) in the institution of the diaconate which included both Greek and Hebrew speakers. In local Churches, like Bishop Dowd’s Montreal or mine (Miami) we find great diversity - a diversity which witnesses to the universality of the Church and her evangelical mission - but a diversity which can present real challenges especially with one group or another rightly or wrongly perceives that they are being slighted. As the early Church responded with the institution of the diaconate, in more recent years the Church has also responded to the challenges of diversity through the provision of ethnic or personal parishes.

But, in all this, it must be remembered that diversity is a gift. God has blessed the world with an incredible diversity of peoples and cultures - and each can be fertile soil in which the gospel can take root. Diversity does not divide the Body of Christ; rather, diversity enriches the Church. Only sin divides.

In a world of fragile peace and broken promises, the Church in bearing witness to Christ who through his passion, death and Resurrection has reconciled us to God and to one another must show the world what a reconciled and reconciling world could look like.

In my Archdiocese, a local Church with perhaps more than 1.2 million Catholics, 70% of whom were born outside the United States, we are blessed with a rich tapestry of cultures and languages. Masses are celebrated in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Chinese, Korean and perhaps one or

two more that I don't recall at the moment. The Archdiocese has 106 parishes - of which 17 are pastored by priests born in the United States. My Presbyterate is made up of Irish, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Haitian, Colombian, Nicaraguan, Peruvian, Dominican, Argentinian, Brazilian, Polish, Nigerian, Burundian, Filipino, Indian, Costa Rican, Mexican, Italian; Ghanaian among others - beside those who like myself were born in the US.

Yet, in spite of this diversity of national origins (and of different experiences of priestly formation) we have a remarkably cohesive Presbyterate - where there is unity, a unity built around not a common national or linguistic identity but on Jesus Christ. Again, this diversity is not divisive; it is incredibly enriching. Division comes from sin.

However, this diversity requires a sensitivity and an openness to the Spirit to respond to the pastoral needs of a Church which can be defined in the words of James Joyce "here comes everybody". Sometimes, not everybody comes; sometimes, much like those Greek speaking converts in the Acts of the Apostles, one group or another feels slighted or left out. Sin can dull our minds as well as close our hearts. Thus, today the Church in an increasingly globalized world must know how to be a cultural "broker". We cannot afford to make any one group an orphan (for orphans inevitably become delinquents). This requires that same pastoral imagination that inspired the early apostles to chose those first deacons. We need to be able and willing to provide the pastoral structures through which all can feel at home in the Church. (Of course, most importantly this means also linguistic sensitivity - for if all are children of the Father, then in the Father's House all should be able to speak their mother's tongue.) Many times the reason why the church doesn't seem to "work" anymore is not because of a supposedly "irrelevant"

theology; the church doesn't "work" because of pastoral structures that are outmoded or ill suited to the real needs of the people we are sent to evangelize. Our problem isn't so much with our theology as it is with our "sociology". If you want someone to walk with you (and isn't Christian life just "walking with Jesus" in the company of his friends, the Church), then make sure he has comfortable shoes - for the journey.

From that first Pentecost Sunday, the Church became the world's first truly "globalized" community. In an increasing globalized world, we have something to teach the world. Diversity is not something to be feared or tolerated; it is a gift to be embraced. Our unity in diversity founded on Jesus Christ, "the same, yesterday, today and forever", offers the world the witness of a reconciled and reconciling community.

On April 20, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Archbishop Thomas Wenski the fourth Archbishop of Miami and Metropolitan of the Province of Miami (which includes the seven dioceses of the State of Florida). The installation Mass took place June 1, 2010.

IN MY OPINION



I must begin with a disclaimer. I attended the Guest House Summer Leadership Conference and heard Bishop Dowd give this talk. I was so moved by his talk that I requested

audio copies for distribution to the bishops of the United States.

As president of the NFPC (National Federation of Priests' Councils), my ministry is to facilitate that relationship between bishops and their priests specifically as it is played out in Priests' Councils and Priest Personnel Boards across the country. When we look at the Church documents that govern this relationship, we do not find legalese, but rather familial language. The Vatican II document *Presbyterorum Ordinis* puts it this way:

Therefore, on account of this communion in the same priesthood and ministry, bishops should regard priests as their brothers and friends (38) and be concerned as far as they are able for their material and especially for their spiritual well being. (PO, 7)

The Council fathers see us as family, not as business associates. And yet, in so many places, a business model is more evident, with the bishop as CEO at headquarters and pastors as the 'branch managers.' Msgr. Stephen Rossetti, in his book *Why Priests Are Happy*, says, "Priestly spirituality recognizes the deep bond between bishop and priest. Much more than a

secular boss, a bishop is spiritual father, brother, coworker, and friend; his priests are an extension of his own apostolic ministry."

As a pastor, I was keenly aware that my humor and demeanor would permeate the whole parish. It would show itself in how I presided at liturgy, conducted meetings, and cheered on the sports teams. I have seen this phenomenon while serving in the Navy. The attitude of the captain filtered down through the ranks to the lowliest seaman. As Bishop Dowd says, morale cannot be left to the priests themselves. It starts at the 'top' as it were.

In my opinion, there are several factors that militate against this familial paradigm. The first is our dominant culture. In the United States, that paradigm is a corporate one. Oddly, the modern corporate structure is a direct descendant of the administrative structure of the European Church – Christendom. After all, our first churches were converted office building in ancient Rome. We quantify success in terms of collection amounts, Mass attendance, number of new members, etc. Our parish assignments are predicated upon our perceived effectiveness using these metrics. What about spirituality? What of religious fervor and family values? How do we measure these aspects?

The second factor that militates against the family paradigm is transiency. Bishops are moved from one diocese to another à la the corporate model (see above). This encourages an 'ecclesiastical careerism' that Pope Francis warns against. How can a bishop be father, brother, co-worker and friend if he constantly has his eye on the door? How can priests fully embrace a bishop, never knowing when he will be taken from them? One western U.S. diocese has had three bishops in the last five years! Can you blame the priests for not warming up to their bishop? Because if you invest in someone deeply, you must necessarily endure

the pain of grief when they go. As human beings, both bishops and priests, we attempt to spare ourselves this pain by not fully investing in the first place.

The third factor is the result of the sex abuse scandal. A number of bishops with whom I have spoken deny this, but it is my opinion that the crisis has caused a distancing to occur, even if at the subconscious level. A bishop's first responsibility is to the diocese as a whole. So it only stands to reason that in order to safeguard the diocese from lawsuits and hence a diminishment of service, the bishop must distance himself from his priests just on the off-chance that any one of them might be accused and indicted. This is one reason so many diocesan pension plans are being converted to free-standing trusts. So that no matter what happens, the priests and lay employees can be taken care of in their retirement.

So how do we break out of this mold? How do we become the Church that the Council Fathers, Canon Law, and the Holy Father expect us to be? We need to fully embrace the idea that we are family. We need only look as far as the Trinity for inspiration. God, at His heart, is a family – Father, Son and the Spirit of their interpersonal love – a love so intense and pure that it is its own person. We, as men in 21st century America are loathe to show any sign of affection toward one another, yet the small boy inside of each of us is crying out for just such acceptance and affirmation. We instinctively look to our 'spiritual father' for this affirmation. This is the affective support that Bishop Dowd explores and which cannot be delegated. Just as in a family, a father may delegate his effective tasks – to his wife, or even a another man (a step-father), but he can never delegate the affective. And experience has shown that when one does, the resulting damage to the children is substantial.

The strategies that Bishop Dowd outlines are not burdensome or time consuming and he himself is a stellar example of how he is changing the culture in his diocese by using them. Once there is a connectedness, a knowledge that the bishop is thinking about and praying for me personally, I have a tendency to pray for him as well. I also tend to follow his instructions and participate in diocesan programs more readily and joyfully. Conversely, if I do not feel valued and affirmed but rather more like a step-child or "valued employee," I find it more difficult to do a good job, since he is not going to notice anyway. Some men will even go out their way to stir up trouble just to get a call from the bishop. As any psychologist will tell you, whether the attention is good or bad, at least it's attention.

As the number of priests continues to dwindle, it becomes critical that we feel connected, valued and loved. For many reasons, the locus of that positive regard must be the bishop. So the question remains – how can we help bishops be the spiritual fathers we desperately need them to be?

Rev. Anthony Cutcher from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio is the President of the National Federation of Priests' Councils headquartered in Chicago, IL. nfpc.org



THE GIFT OF TRANSITIONS – A FLOURISHING LIFE

Submitted by: Caroline L. Wroblewski, Ph.D., LCPC, MAC





Change, a basic element of life, continuously reshapes the world and all living things in it. Without it there would be no hope that springs eternal. Yet it's such a common phenomenon that those very aspects key to staying alive and growing occur spontaneously without our awareness. Our heart keeps beating without conscious effort; we breathe, blink, sneeze, and swallow without thinking about it. As we slowly age across the life span, significant events are made to stand out, highlighting our stepping into a new phase of life; i.e., birthdays, graduations, adulthood, marriages, life commitments, etc. These events have great meaning and value. We come to realize our growth, our accomplishments and skills, and more importantly who we are becoming. A child entering the adolescent phase learns and experiences many new and unfamiliar freedoms and the responsibilities that go along with them. And what the adolescent learns through the challenges encountered in adolescence prepares him or her for living in the next life phase, adulthood. This process of living in one life phase and transitioning into the next can serve as a working model for engaging forthcoming major life changing events, both those involving the ongoing developmental life phase and those brought about by critical events. The circumstances surrounding life changing events may differ for each person, but the process of working through them to be more than we were remains the same. Our external circumstances and our internal resources might determine how well we manage these events.

This tends to happen to most professionals and it is not exclusive to lay ministers, religious and the ordained. This happens to career oriented individuals of all walks of life. Most people experience "major changes."

Most individuals have "planned or unexpected" events that can be surprises

and disturbing to balance. Clergy and members of religious congregations are no exception to the reality of meeting up with and managing life changing events. In fact, the lifestyle they've chosen may open them to more frequent experiences of major change. Whether planned or unexpected, these events tend to catch one by surprise in one way or another, disturbing the balance between one's inner life and one's public life. The outer dimensions of life, work, residence, geography, are changing. In some instances the forthcoming event is known, even anticipated with enthusiasm and hope; until, one experiences the unfamiliarity of the new situation. On the other hand, one might dread the approaching change only to be pleasantly surprised to find it satisfying and life-giving. The event, whether in anticipation of it or after it happens, surfaces different unsettling thoughts and feelings, stressing the one whose life and situation are changing. These stresses, whether physical or emotional, needs one's attention and care in order to function well through the life changing event.

Significant life changing events can feel threatening to some because the meaning they've given their life seems no longer valid. In many ways, they are re-enacting the "role versus identity" phase of development as described by Erick Erickson. Their identity might be so closely connected with the work they do that they don't know who they are without it. For example, through his

ministry to parishioners the priest comes to feel worthwhile, experiencing his life as meaningful. This enhances his identity as priest. His work in the parish might be coming to an end. He begins to wonder who he is now that his ministry is no longer. Feeling insecure with the thought of establishing his identity anew in a different locale might distress him. Having to relocate could lead him to fear the loss of social and spiritual supports. A religious sister or brother might feel distressed and sad about leaving the local community and current ministry, feeling established, known, liked, and accomplished, with opportunity to still grow professionally. And, there are others who feel quite excited about the new situation. Because of it they anticipate a new sense of freedom and opportunity for further development both personally and professionally. These more easily choose to take up the challenge, perceiving it to be a call to growth. Sometimes the individual desires a change and seeks it, while another is mandated by outside factors. How these changes come about and are experienced influences one's management and adaptation to the new life situation. Whether the event is chosen or imposed the invitation of God lies within one's heart and needs to be discerned in order to respond well and grow to the fullest of one's potential.

CHOSEN LIFE CHANGING EVENTS

One major life event common to most adults requiring a lengthy period of time

"Significant life changing events can feel threatening to some."

to adapt to the new way of being involves the choice of a life commitment; i.e., those men and women responding to the perceived call to the priesthood or religious life. The Church in its wisdom recognizes the seriousness of validating this call in its depth and breadth, and the need for a time of discernment to respond in truth. Therefore, both dioceses and religious communities ensure a period of formation for men and women to engage the desired lifestyle and gradually incorporate the new way of life into one's whole being. During this time these men and women daily make choices to let go of a former way of life, to say goodbye to what was, to gradually adapt to a new way of becoming, and finally to enter into full incorporation as priest, brother, or sister. What a challenge for one who has been independent, employed, self-directed and reliant, to become a learner, take direction from others, and develop a mature and healthy manner of obedience to God through human authority figures. Formation programs include education, spiritual direction, mentoring, and time to live and grow into the lifestyle. Though one freely chooses to enter into the committed lifestyle the path is wrought with many challenges and pitfalls. The way is new and different, and at times confusing; one is being informed and consequently shaped. One's attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors are sharpened to reflect those of the chosen lifestyle. No one engages this transitional period alone. Mentors, spiritual directors, and when necessary counselors are available to assist them in discerning their call and fully adapt to this new way of life.

Beyond ordination and religious profession or vows lie other eventful opportunities to flourish in life. When these events are viewed in this manner they further renew one's commitment of fidelity to the action of God within them. It takes reflective time to realize all that is happening to one through the major life change, and to respond to God's desire for

them. Other eventful life moments that require a period of time for transitioning adapt to the new situation are: leaving leadership, taking up a new assignment, relocating geographically, grieving the loss of a loved one, and moving into retirement. These kinds of changes penetrate to the core of one's being, to one's mind and heart, and they affect one at all levels of one's being. The changing identity and role needs to be explored and named. One's identity, meaning and purpose in life need clarification for full proclamation. Only with time will integration and adaptation into the new way of living take place.

IMPOSED OR UNEXPECTED LIFE CHANGING EVENTS

The transitional events similar to those named above reflect what all of us have or will face sometime. Some most likely will anticipate and desire them. Some might view these events as impositions and experience them as undesirable. It is one's choice to accept or resist the reality. In the resistance lies a struggle within oneself, with one's God, and with others. Discernment would be helpful here for the individual to realize what is actually being resisted, to break free of it to see clearly the path to take and fully embrace it. Some major life events, though, actually are imposed by external circumstances and affect individuals without their choosing it. Accidents, injuries, and death of loved ones tend to stop one short, rousing strong reactions and powerful emotions. In these sudden instances one is unable to think clearly. Accidents confront individuals with the harsh reality of the many changes brought on by the specific happening; for example, the shock of living with a physical handicap, coping with being traumatized by some offender, or being publicly slandered. These changes affect one deeply. The individual might wonder how he or she will ever be able to live this way.

Recall the event of the Boston marathon in 2013. Those participating never

anticipated the terror and injuries resulting from the bombing. Most, while emotionally distraught, were able to physically walk away; many were hospitalized; and, some died. Many injured are still learning to live with physical handicaps and to cope with consequent life changes. The bombing and its consequences evoked many reactions and called for a response from each one affected. While those injured and handicapped did not choose what happened they still had a choice to make: to be resigned to it or accept it, to endure it or welcome it. The media covered "success" stories of those who found a way for life to have meaning and purpose. What about those who could not come to such an acceptance of their reality, to see it as a challenge and to redirect their lives in a creative, life-giving, and satisfying way? Transitioning from the way it was to the way it is and the way it could be entails a journey beyond the physical. It's a matter of the mind, heart, and soul. Such an event affects the whole person; one's sense of self, one's perception of self in relation to others, to God, and to the world around them. Such a transition involves an inner journey of discovering one's worth and meaning anew, and taking steps to adapt to their new reality.

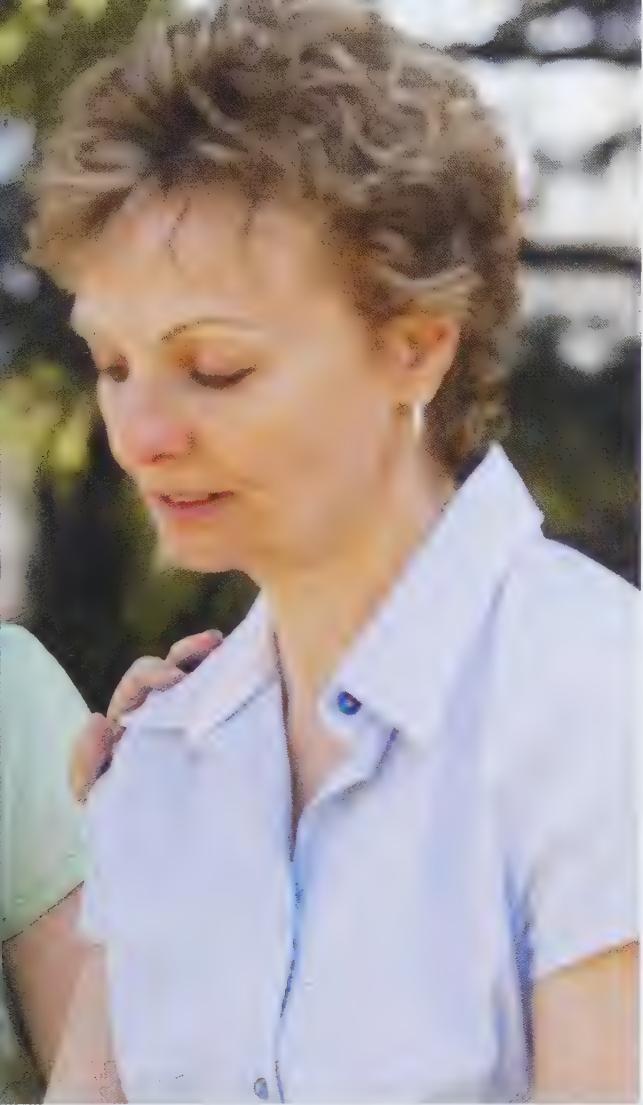
A number of priests, brothers, and sisters have experienced an unexpected life changing event since making their life commitment. Accidents causing serious injury might have left some with a physical handicap, while others suffered the ill effects of chronic diseases. These major life events initiated at the moment of the accident or when first receiving the diagnosis, triggered the beginning of the process of transition. Those in leadership need to ensure that help is available for them to face and work with their reality as they waken to different aspects of it each day, so they will not merely adjust to their situation but instead adapt to it. Those who adapt



and find meaning actually become wisdom figures, giving witness to the wonderful possibilities when accepting life on life's terms.

THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION

For more than 35 years the late William Bridges, PhD, researcher and educator, studied and worked with adults of all ages who were in the process of a major life change. He distinguished the external dimensions of change from the inner experience of the person in the process of change. He indicated that transition is psychological, involving an inner reorientation and self-definition. Transition focuses not on the life changing event, the external reality, but on the internal spiritual and psychological processes one goes through when moving



out of the past to live in the present, thereby discovering who one is to become.

These events usually cause significant changes that are visible to observers, while some of these changes are not so obvious. Those hidden lie deep within the person in the spiritual and psychological domains. These areas reveal how the person experiences the event and what prompts their response to it. Until the person shares this inner part of one's self with a trusted other, they cannot be helped in uncovering and clarifying any inner chaos. Working through the impact of a life changing event with trusted and respected other is critical to a positive outcome of the transition.

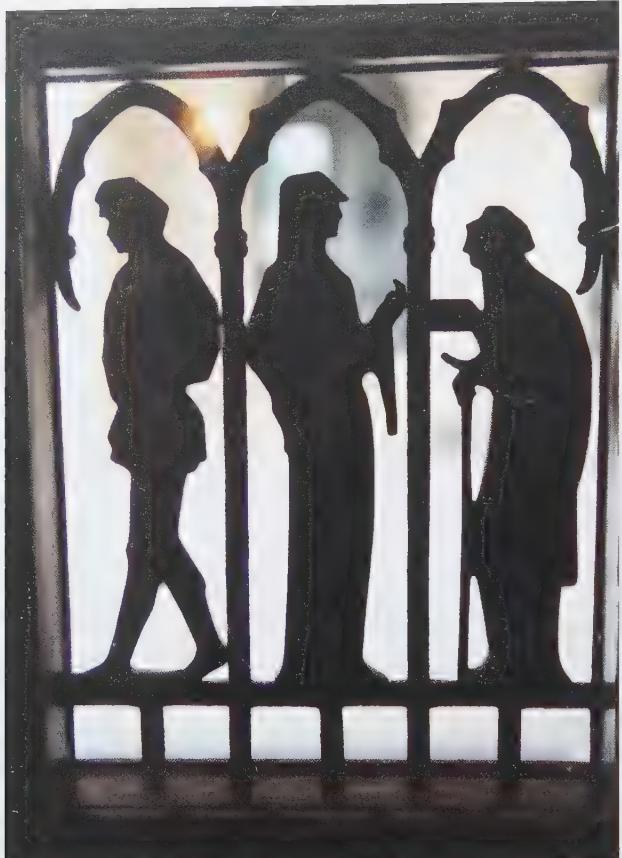
To better grasp the deeper riches and gifts available to those in transition, the three

phases of transition described by William Bridges will be discussed: the Ending, the Neutral Zone, and the New Beginning. Some engage these phases separately and consecutively while others are challenged to work through two transitional phases simultaneously. A sister or brother might take leave of one ministry while at the same time being thrust into the new one. And yet another, having to leave a ministry because of a serious illness, might also be grieving the loss of a beloved family member. Multiple transitions are more difficult and challenging to manage.

THE FIRST PHASE: THE ENDING

This initial phase validates that every ending is simultaneously a beginning. One cannot say hello and fully enter into what the future holds without first saying goodbye to what was: to a ministry, to a place of residence, to ending relationships, or to the loss of supportive friends and confidants. One of the tasks of this phase is to bring closure to what was. For example, the challenges facing a pastor affect all aspects of his being when struggling to let go of the footholds of the present; i.e., the parish he so loved, allowing it to become part of his history. No matter what the future direction, known or unknown, it cannot be entered well until he incorporates who and what he has become through his ministry, his friends, and colleagues.

Consider the process of a Provincial or Major Superior who is ending a term of leadership. For this person the transition began long before actually leaving that office. All the work to be done to step out of the office might render little time to focus on what one is experiencing emotionally. Stress –whether pleasant or unpleasant - only increases as the specific date to leave the position approaches. The leader may feel a sense of liberation and freedom and less stress. There are cases of superiors or provincials, as in the case of those battling tough cases, bankruptcies, or



other issues that, as the day approaches for leaving, they feel relieved, less stressed out, and a sense of joyous anticipation.

The emotion, tension, and pressure surrounding the tasks to be completed take a toll on one's body and spirit. Self-care might suffer because one has little time or ability to sleep, eat nutritionally, exercise, pray, or enjoy some leisure time. Someone may not be interested in processing it emotionally for various reasons. Some may lack the ability to do it, or simply stay focused on the task at hand, and they may compartmentalize it. Or it could be the opposite, as in the case of a religious leader who experiences his/her transition as a promotion, as a change for the better, as to a better geographic area of the country, to a place closer to family, or a better community, and as the data approaches, the person will feel enthusiastic, elated, hopeful, happy, and very optimistic. All of these are essential to good health, and to good planning for the completion of tasks.

Retirement is certainly a significant time for those who finally reach that age. How one perceives this event, the meaning and purpose given it, and the circumstances that dictate it make all the difference in one's attitude towards its arrival. Priests, deacons, religious and lay ministers in this phase may realize they have lived longer than they are going to live. They may be confronted with several challenges, one of which is to discover who one is without ministry. Their life has been one of service. Some feel their life is meaningless without ministry, and become angry, depressed, and tend to isolate themselves. Again, they seem to confuse who they are with what they have done. Awareness of physical aging, the inevitability of dying, and concern for one's relationship with God deepens. They might be seduced and succumb to some of the cultural views about the elderly. How to live in light of these realities might be questioned. There are those who look forward to retirement and have planned for it. They began, either before actually retiring or shortly after, looking within to identify their wants and needs. They shifted their focus to the wonderful possibilities in life that comes with retirement. Spiritual directors and counselors are helpful here and would do well to learn from the retiree his or her view of the situation in order to help identify and clarify any confusion of thoughts and feelings.

For those who initiate the major life change, this phase begins at the time the decision is made to resign or retire. It is from the moment of the announcement that one begins to vulnerably move away from the familiar and step into the unknown, all the while taking in the congratulations or sympathies of others, responding to questions about future plans, and accepting invitations for farewell luncheons. Those for whom the life change is unexpected have to manage not only bringing closure to what was but also facing into the realit



of the present. The unexpected event surfaced losses to be grieved; i.e., one's ministry or one's damaging injury. Shock, anger, hurt, and disbelief are just some of the emotions to be managed. And the thoughts about personal worth, meaning and value need to be explored.

THE SECOND PHASE: THE NEUTRAL ZONE

This mid-phase of transition is no easy space in which to be. It begins shortly after having walked out the door of meaningful ministry and lasts until settled in the new reality. This is the time to reflect on what one is to experience in the present. This is essential for psychological and spiritual health.

Those already in the new setting might feel unable to find the time. The stressors in the new situation and the distress from the unresolved emotions beg one's focus and reflection if one is to continue flourishing in life, love, and service. In the new ministry almost nothing seems familiar to the priest; the colleagues, the schedule, the environment, the responsibilities, and maybe even those with whom he lives. A sister or brother might have relocated to a new residence and feel lost and alone because no sense of connection with the new community is yet experienced. Or, one who has retired and still living with the same community experiences life differently. Most members in the community engaged in active ministry are away from home. Those at home already have their own routine of activities unlike the newly retired one. In this phase the retiree is challenged to take time to explore new interests and construct a new schedule of routine that is satisfying and life giving. Others might not notice the plight of the individual in this phase, not realizing the need for support, understanding, or encouragement. This only emphasizes the distance felt with those around and

contributes to further felt separation and loneliness. Whether a member of a religious community or a diocesan priest a new structure needs to be established; one's meaning and purpose re-identified; and, a sense of community and connection experienced. Until this is established one typically feels disoriented, one's stability is shaken.

For those leaving leadership, this in-between phase of transition provides time to manage unresolved feelings: grief from having buried so many of their members and possibly family members or friends while in office; anger or depression due to conflicting relationships resulting from actions taken while in office; and loneliness as contact with family and friends had been less frequent. The quality of one's sharing with others might have been more limited, given that so much of one's work dealt with confidences. Becoming one with one's peers again, especially in religious congregations, might be quite challenging at this time. The confidential material one acquired in this role about the members could set up a complex relational dynamic if involving friends or living companions; mutuality between them could suffer when leadership acted for the good of both the congregation and the other. Resolution of such matters is necessary for the friendship to continue. Working through unresolved issues and relationships from one's time in leadership, making peace with the past, is critical during this phase. It is also a time for the priest, brother or sister to reflect and identify what he or she has become through the role in leadership and what kind of person he or she is called to be. What gifts, talents, skills were gained or developed, and which are the ones to be utilized in the next pursuit? It is a time to give thanks for all that has been, to resolve any misgivings and make amends, and to work towards personal healing. It is a time of conversion and renewal.

No matter the life changing event the work of the Neutral Zone is the same for all. Throughout this time one needs to actually face into the reality of separation and all that it means. And rather than minimize, ignore, or deny emotions that surface, allow them expression. Whatever the feeling, it calls for one's careful attention. Sadness, grief, anger, anxiety or fear, as well as happiness, excitement or anticipation, each bears a valuable message for the one experiencing it. Owning these

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feelings, working through them to know their meaning, and using them to guide one towards acceptance and appropriate action frees one to move through the transition in a healthy manner. This work is a slow process. Spiritual directors and counselors provide a safe and trusted environment for the priest, brother, or sister to work through the emotional chaos and come to greater clarity about oneself and one's call. The former helps the individual discern the source of these feelings and to claim the direction of God in one's life; the latter facilitates the expression, management, and resolution of these feelings as well as the clarification any thoughts provoked, furthering the freedom to choose wisely and well through the transition.

In many dioceses, religious communities, and places of ministry, sabbatical time is provided for this in-between phase. William Bridges learned through his work

that it takes at least six to twelve months to transition well, allowing time to rest, relax and renew in mind, body, and spirit. As part of their sabbatical time some sisters volunteered for a few months in works they had never done before in order to translate their skills and discover new possibilities for their future. Others participated in renewal programs, workshops, retreats, and traveled for similar purposes. And some, knowing what ministry they wanted entered a degreed program.

The work of this phase is rich with gifts; it is a time to grow in self-awareness of one's life and reality, and of what is really important. Many different images might come to mind for this period of one's life. It is like giving birth again to a new self. It is like walking by the ocean and seeing and hearing its waves that constantly remind us that life is changing all around us, if we but take the time to walk, to listen to these sounds and realities. It is like discovering who you are when you least anticipate it in the littlest of things in our daily routines. So often it requires time and space to see oneself, others and the world differently. It is an ancient and essential spiritual rhythm that one can no longer ignore.

This period could be likened to the “dark night” of the soul, described in the writings of St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa of Avila. One needs to surrender to the darkness, the aloneness, and let it be. We have all experienced our eyes adapting to darkness, slowly seeing more clearly as we stay there. Having been accidentally caught on the Appalachian Trail in darkness and needing to wait until morning to get down the mountain, I was astounded with what I could see. The stars were so big and brilliant; planets not normally visible to the naked eye could be seen. I had to be in darkness to see this gift of God's creation. This is similar to the gift available to those who open themselves to the vulnerability of this confusing phase of transition. It is important that one



not journey alone through this phase. A spiritual director or trusted wisdom figure can listen to one in this phase in a most helpful way. He or she could cast light in the darkness caused by any disturbances experienced. Giving voice to these disturbances and gaining clarity about the messages contained therein lead one to the New Beginning, the third and final phase of transition.

THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS AND COUNSELORS

Questions, doubts, and difficult feelings emerge in all three phases of transition, especially throughout the first two phases of the process. One facing a major life change would really benefit by working with a spiritual director or counselor throughout the time of these two phases. Some important questions that usually

surface, revealing the inner work one is being invited to explore, might be: How am I to bring closure and say goodbye to all I'm leaving behind? Why am I so confused? Who am I when I am no longer here doing this? How can I cope with this loss? How can I ever begin again?" Why do I have all these feelings? What am I really feeling about having to leave where I have been so happy? Where am I to find support? How do I manage my loneliness? What do I need to do to manage my stress and be in good health? Who am I called to be? Who am I becoming? What does the future hold for me?

Sadly, some avoid attending to these questions and try to just move on. They might have difficulty identifying and fear working with the emotional aspects of endings, with the saying goodbye to a way

of life. As most have been in highly active ministry, the slow pace of the Neutral Zone could rouse anxiety and impatience and block one's hearing the inner voice of God.

Spiritual directors need to be aware of the different dimensions of the person affected by changes when in transition. The one in transition might be so overwhelmed with situational concerns and remain unaware of important interior movements of the Spirit that exploring their questions could help identify. The important role of the director is to listen, keep the focus on the present, and help the one in transition clarify expressed thoughts and their accompanying feelings. It is important that one in transition keep in balance the awareness of what is happening within one's being as well as the awareness of what one needs to do to prepare for the new reality.

The utilization of spiritual direction and counseling is valuable during this time to focus on one's present experience, gain clarity about one's identity, meaning, purpose and direction in life, and to foster the gradual adaptation to living well in the present.

THE THIRD PHASE: A NEW BEGINNING PHASE

How one does the inner work of the mid-phase has a significant impact on the outcome of this next phase, either facilitating it or hampering it. If done well, the old "skin" is shed; the one in transition comes to a new and deeper sense of self. He or she is now ready to embark on the next phase of the transition journey. By this time, one has already begun living in the new situation in life. The person is either involved in the new ministry or is retired, and settled again in the place of residence. One is becoming familiar with the changed surroundings. The work and schedule of the new ministry by this time fits with the newly created daily routine. The practicalities of living are becoming familiar, no longer so new and

different. The schedule of activities and responsibilities of work, community and priestly life seem to balance well with time needed for personal and spiritual responsibilities. Having developed supportive relationships with colleagues and friends only encourages one to further adapt, feel at home, and take root in the current reality. Those who have been faithful to the process know themselves better, from the inside out. They not only shaped their outer world, but they also allowed the transformation of their interior life. They know their true strengths discovered in their vulnerabilities. They acknowledged and worked through fears, anxieties, angers and hurts. They lived with unanswered questions, with the discomfort of not knowing. They looked within, facing what seemed like demons, and learned to befriend them. What work remains is the integration of one's interior self with the outer self that others see. This is the work of inner consistency, the task of a lifetime.

CONCLUSION

Major life changes for adults can be likened to the adolescent experience of becoming an adult. Coping with these changes will greatly depend on how the person has lived his or her life. If the person has fostered self-care, developed a strong emotional support system, maintained a deep relationship with God, and internalized an overall feeling of well-being and happiness, then transitioning will be managed with more ease. However if the person does not successfully meet developmental crises, neglects addressing "unfinished business" in life, and fails to develop strong and fulfilling relationships with others, this person will most likely approach major life changes with distress and suffering. Perceptions about oneself, anxieties about the future, and insecurities about the unknown, leave will leave the person feeling quite vulnerable and in need of support and understanding from

trusted others. This vulnerability stems from the heart, from where hope and love emanate. Loss of what enabled the human heart to flourish leaves one feeling disoriented, disconnected, and even empty. Transitional times provide the space to deepen in hope and love, to discover and accept anew God's invitation to the fullness of life.

Religious leaders need to recognize the golden opportunity transitions provide their members who open themselves to pay attention to their inner stirrings and explore their meaning anew. They need

to encourage those facing a major life change to open themselves to reflective time, support, and spiritual direction. The possibilities are many and great: to flourish in valuing oneself loved by God, deepening their relationship with God, and in renewing one's vocation and desire to serve.

REFERENCE

Bridges, W. (2004). *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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IN MY OPINION



This article by Dr. Wroblewski has pointed out that change happens to us in life but transitions, because they are inner processes, must be chosen. She has used examples of life changing events

to focus the insights of William Bridges about transitions. In a word, transitions begin with letting go, move through a time of being adrift and culminate in an experience of reconnection. The challenges posed by transition are the need for insight into one's experience and the ability to own and embrace one's thoughts and feelings so that one finds meaning and can re-establish one's identity. That process can be greatly helped by skilled listeners, particularly spiritual directors and counselors. At the same time, Dr. Wroblewski hints at the role for leaders suggesting that we find our appropriate place in support of those in transition. I would like to explore the leaders role a bit more.

Dr. Wroblewski's insights are timely in that so much of life in religious congregations and in dioceses or parishes is in flux in these complex times. Change abounds and many of us both as individuals and as members of groups struggle to integrate our experiences.

First, it seems important to distinguish the legitimate autonomy of a healthy adult in negotiating transition and in choosing the tools for growth that are appropriate for that person. Here the role of leader might be simply that of encouragement.

At other times, a leader may recognize that a member is not functioning well in a transition

and may need more than encouragement. If the transition is particularly painful or disorienting the leader may need to name the dynamics observed, suggest ways to access persons or programs that could be helpful and work to make appropriate resources available.

During a recent address to the Assembly of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Nancy Schreck OSF, shared some insights around the darkness experienced in "the middle space." She reminded the leaders gathered there that "[k]nowing how to walk in the dark takes time. When we do so we sign a waiver that allows us to bump into some things that frighten us at first. But all we need do is to ask the mystery of darkness to teach us, to follow the darkness wherever it leads, and to become intimate with darkness."

In thinking about Dr. Wroblewski's description of the process of transition I can see how the second stage she describes is an experience of stumbling about in the darkness. From her own experience in assisting those in transition, she is signing the waiver allowing the one in transition "to bump in to some things."

I also realize that beyond Dr. Wroblewski's descriptions there can be multiple levels of complexity that are more than the simple one-to-one relationship of the one in transition with a trusted listener.

One form of complexity occurs when a leader is involved in the life changing event itself and may be a contributor to some of the experience of disorientation. For example, if an individual is engaged in a ministry of the congregation for which the leader has governance responsibility, that leader might be called upon to act in the name of the ministry while at the same time desiring to be supportive to the member who is leaving it.

In other cases, the leader might be the precipitator of the change for a member. That person may not want any connection with or may feel resentment toward the leader and others responsible for the change. This can challenge the leader to recognize multiple responsibilities, those to the member to provide support and those to seek the common good for the congregation and/or the ministry. It will require negotiation of the appropriate boundaries and the ability to involve others in leadership in attending to the needed support for the member in transition.

Sometimes the levels of complexity pertain more to the member in transition. The ability of the person in transition to let go even with the help of a trusted listener can still be complicated by those left behind who cannot let go or even by those who are happy to see one go. This, too, requires a deep knowing of self and concrete support in navigating the complexity.

In the case of someone retiring from active ministry, that member must let go and bring the role to some closure. At the same time those with whom the member has engaged in ministry must let go of the member and of “the way we do things here.” Saying good-bye is really a multi-faceted conversation.

Dr. Wroblewski compares the time of being adrift to the experience of being caught on the Appalachian Trail in the darkness. Again, I find resonance with Sr. Nancy Schreck’s address to the LCWR Assembly. She likens the transition through “the middle space” to the “dark night” and says, “When this process happens in an individual we name it conversion and notice a more mature ability to love. While the dark night of the soul is usually understood to descend on one person at a time, there are clearly times when whole communities of people lose sight of the sun in ways that unnerve them. When a group negotiates this process it too becomes

mature in its ability to love.”

This suggests to me that organizations also need to attend to how transitions occur and what is needed to help all those affected by the transition move through the letting go, the being adrift and finally the reconnection. The experience of reconnection that occurs when a transition has been successfully negotiated witnesses to the kind of maturation that exhibits renewed energy to love. This is true for the individual and for the organization in transition. And, here the role of leadership is to help frame the issues and provide resources. Organizational consultants may also be the “trusted listener” needed by the organization while the individual in transition relies on the help of spiritual directors and counselors.

Incorporating a healthy attitude toward change and transition into the culture of a religious congregation or of a diocese may require providing opportunities for understanding the transition process and its importance to healthy development. It may also require a regularizing of the practice of seeking spiritual direction or counseling. And it requires access to and the willingness to use organizational consultants. Here the role of leadership is to foster the change in culture that can lead to healthy transitions for all.

Regardless of one’s place in the process of transition, openness to the challenges and reliance on others can make all the difference in a healthy maturing and as Dr. Wroblewski says, “accept[ing] anew God’s invitation to the fullness of life.”

Sister Pat Cormack is provincial of the USA province of the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross.

IN MY OPINION



I led my first workshop on "Transitions" in Baltimore in the spring of 2003. I was asked to do some facilitation for a group of Jesuit volunteers who were involved in an inner city project. After listening to this

impressive group of young people talk about their concerns, challenges and work related tensions, I proposed to lead a workshop for them on the theme of transitions, making use of the material developed by William Bridges, as Dr. Wroblewski has done in her article.

The workshop was an enjoyable experience, and I remember being pleasantly surprised at how effective this approach was in creating a space for each individual to better understand how their own particular situations were affecting their work as a team. The workshop offered the participants a safe space, with a language and a model of understanding, where they could express feelings, anxieties, hopes, difficulties and challenges. I was not able to follow up with the group, but I sensed that the workshop released a great deal of energy which had the potential to increase their effectiveness as a team.

I share this story as it highlighted the value of the "gift of transitions" for individuals and groups. Over the past ten years I have worked as Director of Human Formation in a seminary, and as Provincial. I have also contributed to ongoing formation programmes for a range of groups. I have made use of the transitions material in all of these roles, and, without fail, have found that it leads to insight and a positive response from participants.

Dr. Wroblewski's article focuses on transition in the life of individuals, and I concur with what she has written in her article. In recent years, though, I have also been concerned with transitions and change in organizations and religious institutes. During my years in the seminary I worked with Dr. Chris Fallon, a colleague and priest of Liverpool Diocese, to explore the issue of transitions in parishes – particularly when the priests were involved in closing, merging or clustering parishes. Dr. Fallon presented data on the history of parish growth and decline. I then used the transitions material to explore the effect on parishioners and clergy, as they dealt with loss of buildings, the process of closing or merging parishes, and the impact on priests and clergy.

Loss was a key issue. The most obvious loss was the Church buildings, particularly where the individual or family members had been involved in the foundation of the parish and had contributed money, gifts or church furnishings. There was also the loss of the parish's own priest, of familiar structures, organizations, times of church services etc. Perhaps, most importantly, there was a loss of the person's spiritual home, where significant family events had been celebrated.

One of the key issues that emerged in these presentations was the changing role of the priest from pastor of a single community, to priest responsible for sacramental provision, building maintenance and team leadership in one or more parishes, and two or more church buildings. Priests often lamented the amount of time given to sacramental provision and meetings, and the loss of time for visits and personal contact. I also became aware of the number of priests who were asked to move parish or residence several times in a short space of time. Bearing in mind what we have learned about the length of time necessary to move from the "beginning of an ending" to "the end of a beginning," I became

concerned about the emotional wear and tear on pastors who had barely had time to establish themselves in a new parish before being asked to enter another transition phase. Bishops were present at a number of these presentations and I sense that this information was a revelation to them, as they had not considered the psychological impact of frequent change on the well-being of their presbyterate.

Many dioceses have put in place processes to deal with the need to reduce the number of parishes, and the diocese of Leeds in England invited the Kinharvie Institute of Facilitation, based in Glasgow, Scotland, to undertake a review of their process. One of the key findings of the report was that:

The ‘Providing Priests for the People’ project would have had a much better chance of success had the model adopted been one where a clear, inspiring picture of the future was painted. In essence, people need a vision of the ‘promised land’ . . .”

In other words, the people knew that what they had – and valued – was ending, but were not offered a compelling vision of an different and attractive future.

This insight brings to another aspect of transitions which touches my own life: the transitions taking place in religious life. Like many religious leaders, my energies are divided between managing diminishment and supporting mission. The insight from the Kinharvie report invites religious leaders to reflect on what vision – if any – is being offered to members of religious orders that can harness their energies to continue with hope and vitality to a new and different future.

I would like to end with the suggestion that we need a spirituality of transition, which enables people to understand their experiences within a faith context. We already have such a resource

in the theology of the Paschal mystery, where we understand our life experiences in terms of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Caroline Wroblewski is right to highlight the importance of the “neutral zone” in transition experiences. I would like to suggest that we need to rediscover the place of Holy Saturday – psychologically, organizationally and theologically – to help us to understand and live the gift of transitions in our lives. Only then can we fully experience true resurrection – and the beginning of new life.

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Transitions are considered stressful and challenge one's comfortable place in religious life and in one's secure place in society. Yet change is an essential element of life. Unexpected transitions like

accidents, injuries and illnesses are traumatic, nonetheless theorizing about change in the flow of the natural, physical and psychological scheme of the universe forces us to develop a new model of thinking about change and transitions. Here I propose a different perspective on thinking about transitions and change, a reconceptualization that includes the individual and his/her context in the wider universe of humans as spiritual, biological and psychological beings. Transitions are viewed as constant, the constancy of change. In this report considered will be the nature of change, physical and psychological adaptations to change and implications for prevention of traumatic change.

THE NATURE OF CHANGE IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

A Greek philosopher of the late 6th century BCE, Heraclitus, criticized his contemporaries for their failure to see the unity in experience. He proposed that opposites are necessary for life, but they are unified in a system of balanced exchanges, considered here as adaptations. Heraclitus also viewed life as a balanced exchange including the notion of the constancy of change. He is attributed with the notion that all things go and nothing stays, and compared existence to the flow of a river; "You could not step twice into the same river." This modest sentence captures adeptly the modern

conception in theories of human development that we are constantly in a state of change. So how can we constantly change yet maintain our personalities, our spirituality and physical being as well as our billions of thoughts, feelings and cognitions? Change is constant and happens at a person, context and molecular and cellular level visible only to a small set of molecular biologists. For instance, cells turn over constantly but we are unaware of these ongoing and life giving biological changes. Similarly, change is evident in physical growth in children and adolescents and occurs at a fairly rapid rate measurably in weeks, months and years. As adults our physical being changes less rapidly than in children but nonetheless physical characteristics decline in a less positive direction, frequently denied or ignored especially with regard to weight status. Similarly, our thoughts, emotions and perspectives change from minute to minute. In brief, we are always in a state of change with the magnitude of the change proportional to its perceived severity and turmoil or trauma.

As nicely laid out by Dr Wroblewski, clergy and members of religious congregations encounter many life changing transitions. These transitions tend to be described in terms of internal psychological processes regarding transitions. For instance, loss is placed in the context of loss of friends, fellow priests, nuns, and a former congregation. The loss of social support during a transition can be particularly traumatic especially during times of death and grief. It is important to consider that life changes can bring about major biological changes, as described above, that either precede or follow transitions. Heightened stress responses are associated with depression, anxiety, arthritis and disruption of the immune system. Finally, chronic stressors can lead to structural and functional brain changes with unknown long term outcomes. These major biological changes should not be ignored given their potential threats to health. Yes, helping with the transition by focusing on

the psychological sequelae is of high importance but the overall emotional and physical health of the individual is the desired goal.

PREVENTION

The gift of transitions offers abundant observations and suggestions regarding the phenomenological characterization of transitions. What needs to be addressed is the overriding question of whether the traumatic stressors of transitions can be prevented? Framing transitions as part of the constancy of change is a novel strategy that may help to prevent the painful sequelae of transitions. Educating young priests, brothers and nuns to the essential nature of change in advance of stressful transitions may help to alleviate or dampen the psychological and biological consequences of transitions. Anticipation of transitions, both normative and unexpected transitions, allows one to adapt to the possible consequences given that changes are endemic to religious life as in life in general. Important to consider is the vast individual differences in how any one individual adapts to the constancy of change. Given the varied genetic, cultural and rearing influences on the neurobiology of stress it is not surprising that vast differences are evident in how individuals adapt to transitions. In essence, there is no one pattern of adapting to transitions even within individuals. Thus informing individuals of how their reactions to transitions may change over time is yet another educational strategy to prevent the stress of transitions.

Prevention from a constancy of change perspective mandates that new ways are needed to adapt to transitions. Traditionally, reliance on psychosocial support has been a preferred strategy: building self-esteem, peer support, guidance counseling and clergy support. In brief, strategies for helping with transitions originate with others. A constancy of change perspective includes the notion of building

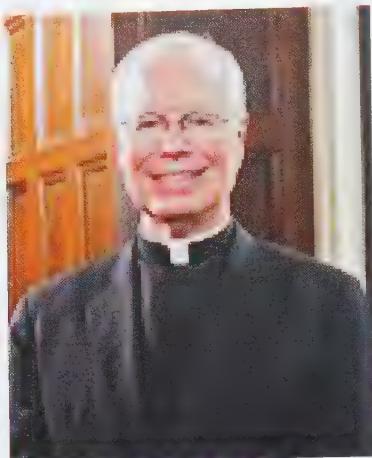
new competencies that come from within the individual. Mindfulness, meditation and yoga are holistic strategies that may balance the biological and psychological turmoil that accompanies transitions. These strategies bring feelings of calm, peace and tranquility and foster new strategies for adaptation.

CONCLUSION

Orientation to the constancy of change necessitates anticipatory explanations of the kinds of transitions that have a high probability of occurring in a life committed to serving. The anticipatory educational strategy should emphasize that transitions not only are psychologically based but potentially harmful biological changes also occur during transitions. Teaching holistic calming strategies like mindfulness bring together mind and body, biology and behavior to help with adaptation to the constancy of change. On psychosocial support has been a preferred strategy: building self-esteem, peer support, guidance counseling and clergy support. In brief, strategies for helping with transitions originate with others. A constancy of change perspective includes the notion of building new competencies that come from within the individual. Mindfulness, meditation and yoga are holistic strategies that may balance the biological and psychological turmoil that accompanies transitions. These strategies bring feelings of calm, peace and tranquility and foster new strategies for adaptation.

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IN MY OPINION



Ever since Heraclitus pronounced his dictum about not being able to step in the same river twice the question of change has been a perennial reflective challenge. Wroblewski's essay offers

opportunities for the religiously vowed and clergy to consider questions and strategies when managing a life change. Several themes emerged for me through her excellent essay. The first theme pertains to the vicissitudes of the vow of obedience. While not addressed explicitly the vow seems to be implied in the essay, since for most readers change and transition often involves being missioned somewhere by someone. In this respect I was reminded of my transition into religious life. On the very first night I was informed that transitions would essentially become an expected experience. After a momentous day spent saying farewell to family and friends and moving into the novitiate, i.e."leaving the world", my fellow novices and I assembled and listened to our formation director speak with us about his expectations. Several decades later his words continue to resonate: "You are not here to simply to become good novices, but to learn how to be a religious and that means taking risks for Christ."

For the next two years we went on "experiments" whereby we were challenged to move out of our comfort zones. Within the month I was in prison... that is to say I began working in prison ministry as my first "experiment." These "experiments" or more accurately "formative missions," a total of 7 within 2 years, were designed to demonstrate the depth, alacrity, and

often the mobility of a Jesuit vocation. Many years later, as I reflect upon these experiments and the experiences of change and transition involved in each of them, I appreciate the demands of mobility, of moving in and out of the lives for whom and with whom I served. In effect, I was learning the dynamics of the vow of obedience. In this sense the vow became not simply an order from a religious superior, but a process of discernment whereby one may have a sense of being sent by The Spirit of the Christ who calls and at times challenges me to take risks and thereby undergo the oftentimes difficult movements of transition.

The second theme, which emerges from Wroblewski essay, is found in her use of William Bridges noteworthy work *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Change*, the first edition of which was published in 1979. I should note that I find that the author's very name to be a useful metaphor for "Bridges" offers "bridges" to cross over in one's life journey. Wroblewski in particular notes Bridges' three stages of transition: beginning, neutral zone and ending. Taken individually each phase has its challenges and taken collectively Wroblewski suggests that flourishing graces can happen through the transitions. As a young priest back in the 1980s I read the first edition and found Bridges' analysis especially useful in my ministry with a retreat program serving the separated, divorced and widowed, known as The Beginning Experience (BE). As a member of this team ministry the phases of transition were quite helpful in guiding those experiencing intense loss through their transitions. It seemed to me, however, that the recognition of any flourishing graces was not as much perceived during the transition as much as afterwards.

Bridges' matrix is not only useful in times of particular transition, but also in one's developmental stage in life. The dynamics suggested by Bridges' phases are quite different

for a novice or a recently vowed than it is for those who transition from a ministry whereby one was deeply engaged for some years. Moreover, disabilities or a departure from a fully active ministry due to age have its own distinct anxieties. These transitions may find one readily encountering issues of grief, loneliness and loss of meaningful work. One's daily routines and rhythms, having changed, may lead to a loss of purposeful goals and lack of meaningful strategies. Existential questions of identity may readily surface. One may soon ask the question, who am I if I am no longer working in this ministry with these people for these purposes? However, the lessons learned from the changes and challenges in one's religious formation, when adapted to the phases in one's psychological development, can serve as wise reminders and sustaining resources. In this respect the Thomistic axiom grace builds on nature (*gratia perfecta natura*) serves as a synergistic principle uniting development with movements of the Spirit.

A developmental perspective to transition may be further understood by distinguishing between proactive versus reactive change. That is to say, the reasons why a significant change has happened can influence the process by which one undergoes the transition. For example, the transitional process is quite distinct if one has chosen to change a ministerial assignment versus being asked to leave. Here too the vow of obedience, formed through a discerning practice of listening (obedience etymologically comes from ob "to" + audire "listen"), prompts within the one transitioned a sense of being sent, ultimately by the Holy Spirit. And as those missioned well know, The Spirit can be a challenging yet comforting guide.

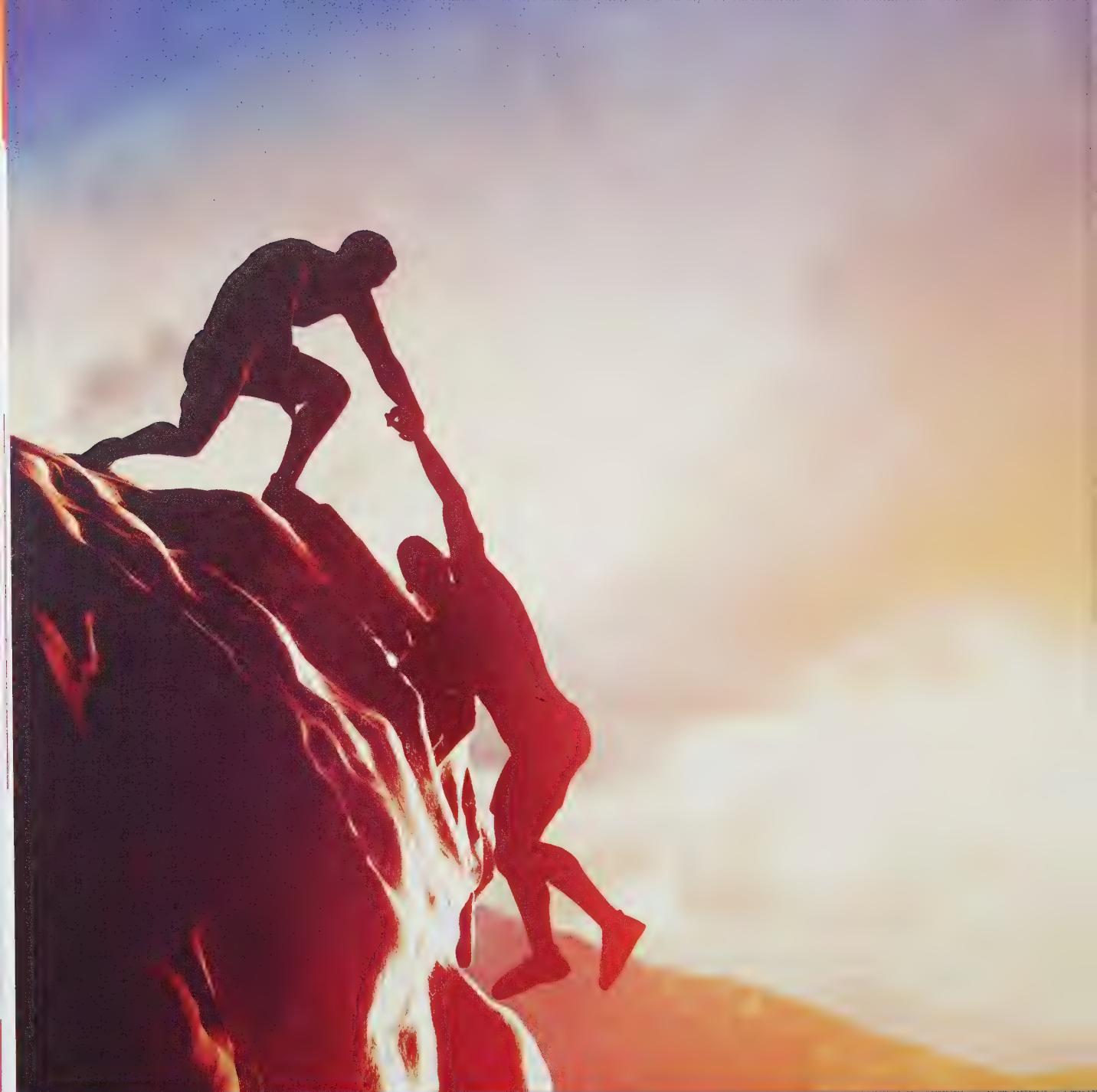
A third emergent theme gleaned from the essay was Wroblewski's insightful distinction between spiritual direction and counseling. She notes that the former focuses upon discernment in light

of God's presence while the latter focuses upon problem solving and resolutions of feelings and thoughts. Having been pastorally engaged in both ministries, I believe her distinction readily applicable. Moreover, adding further nuance to her distinction is the phenomenon of resilience, a quality of action which supplies hope amidst change.

In recent years psychologists in the area of positive psychology have shown resilience to be a significant variable in adaptation to stress and their findings have been applied by counselors. In helping a person through transition a counselor may employ factors associated with successful adaptations which in turn promote healthy forms of resilience. These factors often emerge from a review of a person's own transition history.

Spiritual directors, meanwhile, frequently suggest biblical passages denoting resilience, e.g. Is. 43: 1-4 ("when you cross through deep waters I will be with you"), Jer. 29: 11-14 ("I know the plans I have for you says the Lord"), or even praying over Romans 8:18-23 from the perspective of participating in a wider cosmic evolutionary patterns of change as voiced by Paul when he writes: "The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God...." And then, of course, transitional resilience may be found in the faith journey of Mary the Mother of Jesus. In conclusion Wroblewski's essay suggests resources for those undergoing transition or working with those experiencing changes. Recognition of these resources fosters psychological growth and faith formation which in turn may lead to an awareness of flourishing graces. In this respect, one can build upon Heraclitus in asserting that amidst changes and transitions it is not only the flow of the river which changes, but also the flow of one's life in God.

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NEVER GIVING UP: DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN RESILIENCE

Submitted by: Samuel F. Mikail, Ph.D., C.Psych., ABPP



The recent death of Nelson Mandela served as an opportunity for many to reflect on the strength of the human spirit. Mandela dedicated much of his adult life to ensuring that all South Africans were granted equal rights and privileges in the eyes of the state. His mission came at great cost. Mandela endured countless experiences of physical and emotional violence. Even before Mandela's 27 years of imprisonment his freedom of movement and speech were curtailed in unimaginable ways. At one point Mandela was banned from any form of public assembly and not permitted to speak to more than one person at a time; a dictate that prohibited him from attending his son's birthday party. And yet, the world witnessed Mandela's unfathomable capacity for forgiveness after his release from Robben Island. How can any human, after enduring such restrictions, beatings, hard labour, and deprivation forgive his oppressors? To emerge physically intact after 27 years of such harsh treatment is a sign of hardness. But the willingness to forgive and even embrace one's oppressors is something entirely different. The life of Nelson Mandela reflects the essence of human resilience, an approach to life captured in words that Mandela himself spoke when he said; "Do not judge me by my successes; judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again." (Mandela, 1995).

There is no shortage of examples of human resilience. But how does resilience come to be? Is it an inherent trait, a cultural norm, a learned behavior, or some combination of these things? This article will offer an overview of what we have learned from research on the nature of individual and community resilience.

Scholars define resilience as the outcome of successful adaptation to adversity (Zutra, Hall, & Murray, 2010). More specifically, resilience is the ability to recover from challenges in a manner that leaves an individual or community more flexible and better able to meet future challenges. Resilience involves an ability to react creatively and constructively to change while recognizing that change is an ongoing part of life. Zutra et al (2010) identify two core dimensions of resilience termed recovery and sustainability. They define recovery as the capacity to return to a state of equanimity following a stressful event. Recovery encompasses both speed and thoroughness to return to pre-stress levels. It is not measured by the absence of emotional scaring, but rather the community's or individual's ability to regain a state of well-being. Sustainability refers to the capacity to continue forward in the face of adversity. For individuals this involves remaining engaged in life's tasks including work, play, and social relationships. For communities sustainability is reflected in a community's capacity to create an environment and the associated conditions that allow members to realize their potential.

COMPONENTS OF PERSONAL RESILIENCE

Personal resilience is comprised of three aspects of personality captured by three broad categories that include relationship capacity, emotional processing and self-awareness. Each will be described in turn as it relates to adult resilience.

RELATIONSHIP CAPACITY:

The British psychiatrist John Bowlby articulated a theory of personality organized around the construct of attachment behavior. Bowlby (1988) referred to an individual's attachment style as one's capacity for establishing a secure emotional connection with another person. Attachment style comprises two separate but related dimensions. The first is the extent to which an individual trusts that others are available and capable of responding to one's needs

when called upon. The second involves the extent to which the individual views the self as valued and worthy of others' care. The relationship of attachment to resilience is clear; in the face of adversity, those who hold a view of self as worthy of care and believe that intimate others are both capable and available to help, are apt to seek the support needed to lessen the eroding impact of adverse events. Related to attachment style is the ability to love. An extensive body of research has established that possessing an ability to form mutually authentic, intimate relationships characterized by sustained commitment and fidelity buffers against stress and adversity and is positively correlated with longevity. Play is yet another relational factor contributing to resilience. Although play can be a solitary activity, most play involves engaging with others in some form. Possessing the capacity for symbolic activity that invites openness to engaging life and a desire to join others can buffer the impact of life's challenges, and in turn build resilience. This idea is masterfully illustrated in the film, *Life is Beautiful*, in which the main character, a Jewish man named Guido constructs an elaborate game of make-belief in order to help his son Joshua survive the horrors of internment in a Nazi concentration camp, (Benigni, 1997). Guido exhibits extraordinary resilience through the use of play in the face of unimaginable adversity.

Relationship capacity also includes one's relationship with self. This aspect of relationship comprises aspects of personality that include identity integration, integrity, self-understanding and engagement. The essence of identity integration is a mature understanding of self that allows for recognition of one's gifts and limitations coupled with self-acceptance. Integrity entails having an abiding sense of values that contribute to a stable sense of ethic or morality, even under stress. With respect to resilience, self-understanding means having come to terms with painful experiences from the past in a manner that allows

the individual to find meaning in such experiences. Critical to this process is an ability to understand both self and others in subtle and sophisticated ways. Mandela stated that progress in the South African struggle was only possible once he fully understood his opponents. In this context, we recognize resilience to be as much a verb as it is a noun.

EMOTIONAL PROCESSING:

A growing body of research underscores the beneficial effect of positive emotions on general adjustment and health (Fredrickson, 2009). Positive emotions have been shown to counter the physiological impact of stress. Under normal circumstances, positive and negative emotions can coexist. However, during times of stress positive and negative emotions are inversely related so that as one increases the other diminishes. Positive emotions can thus be used to counter the adverse impact of stress and build resilience. For example, some oncology treatment programs introduced laughter therapy as a means of combating patients' anxiety and depression, while also boosting immune response (see Cancer Treatment Centers of America; cancercenter.com/treatments/laughter-therapy/). Positive emotions also promote social connection, and in turn serve to build one's available supports. Finally, positive emotions have been shown to promote flexible thinking and problem solving, essential ingredients to a resilient existence. A more general aspect of emotional processing is one's capacity to regulate affect. Effective emotion regulation is defined as the ability to express emotions appropriately in quality and intensity according to situational demands. Essential to this capacity is an ability to recognize one's emotions, being able and willing to express one's emotions openly and appropriately, and possessing the ability to recognize and respond to the emotions of others. Such capacities can make the difference between becoming overwhelmed or thriving in the face of crisis. Expressing emotions effectively and appropriately also serves to invite needed

Essential to this capacity is an ability to recognize one's emotions.



support during times of adversity, illness, or other hardship.

SELF-AWARENESS:

Insight is essential to accurate appraisal of one's needs, gifts and limitations and is vital to effective coping and adaptation. Insight is built on the experience of having been understood by a caring and attentive other and is a product of secure attachment. Consistent experiences of empathic attunement deepen our capacity for insight and reality testing. As we mature emotionally and cognitively we broaden our ability to recognize and appreciate others' subjectivity and separateness as well as the capacity to reflect on our experience. Inherent to this is an appreciation that others' behaviors are not necessarily directed toward us, even when we are affected by them. These abilities are essential to resilience in that they allow us to tolerate experiences of existential isolation. It was this constellation of qualities that allowed Mandela to persevere in the struggle against apartheid and sustained him during the years spent on Robben Island.

ACCEPTANCE:

Finally, in the face of adversity, the resilient individual is sustained by an inherent capacity for acceptance; that is an ability to accept what cannot be changed, grieving what cannot not be, and ultimately embracing the life that one has been given. At times, this may involve a willingness to surrender, and nearly always, it demands an openness to love others as they are.

In conclusion, I would suggest that the resilient individual is an engaged individual, able to use his/her talents, abilities, and energy effectively and productively; one who welcomes challenge, and takes pleasure in accomplishing things. Resilience is not a fixed aspect of the human character, wired in as part of one's genetic make-up. Most, if not all, of the dimensions of resilience that have been described above emerge from a combination of experience, attitude and resolve. They are aspects of one's being that can be formed and refined with intentionality.

COMPONENTS OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

As a global family, we have also been witness to the resilience of entire communities. April, 2014 marked the 20th anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda during which 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred by Hutu extremists. Despite the horror and devastation, today Rwanda is flourishing. In a recent Washington Post column Sudarshan Raghavan notes "In the years since the genocide, this tiny East African nation has rebounded: Its economy is surging, poverty has declined, life expectancy has soared and it has been commended for its ongoing effort to achieve social reconciliation." (Washington Post, April 7, 2014).

Weick and Sutcliffe (2007) define organizational resilience as "the capacity of a system to maintain its function and structure in the face of internal and external changes."

Resilience is the ability to recover from adversity that leaves us or our communities more flexible and better able to handle future challenges.

The authors suggest that when faced with crisis or challenge a resilient community does not become derailed from its mission and values. Rather it is able to rebound from the crisis and adhere to its intended purpose. Similarly, Magis (2010) defined community resilience as “the existence, development, and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise.” (p.402). Magis goes on to suggest that members of a resilient community possess a personal and collective capacity “to respond to and influence change, to sustain and renew the community, and to develop new trajectories for the community’s future.” (p. 402).

Within the context of this paper, community is defined as a group of individuals in relationship having a shared sense of identity and mission, or what Black and Hughes (2001) referred to as communities of interest. Black and Hughes (2001) note that communities of interest comprise a network of people connected by a set of common values and purpose rather than geography. This is certainly true of most religious orders and dioceses, where increasingly, members are dispersed geographically, but remain connected by a common set of values and purpose.

Hall and Zautra (2010) suggest that a core dimension of community resilience is the extent to which a community is committed to furthering the capacity of its members to develop and sustain a sense of wellbeing.

Resilient communities possess a number of key characteristics. They provide opportunities for regular interaction between members that serve as a vehicle for building mutual trust and group cohesion. Thus, even though members of a community may be physically separated most of the time, the resilient community creates an infrastructure that promotes regular contact between members. This not only serves to build and solidify member-to-member relationships, but also allows the community to quickly and efficiently mobilize essential resources when confronted with either internal or external threats. Furthermore, members of a resilient community harbour a collective sense of ownership of key assets that include both material resources and human capital. The latter is particularly important because communities that establish a culture in which members recognize and honour the unique gifts and abilities of each member are better positioned to guard against the eroding effects of inter-member jealousy and the destructive impact of a culture of competitiveness in which individual members have a need to feel superior to others.

Resilient communities are able to simultaneously honour the traditions and histories that have shaped their particular mission while remaining open to change. In other words, as in the case of individual resilience, community resilience is not a static characteristic but rather a dynamic process whereby a community is capable of accommodating the demands of a changing

environment while possessing the ability to anticipate and even bring about change (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2010). Viewed in this manner, resilience can be considered an iterative process in which a system continuously builds its potential to respond to challenge and change over time. To give an example, consider the Apple Corporation, now viewed as the most valuable corporation worldwide. Its founder and chairman, Steve Jobs recognized that the personal computer industry had reached a plateau. Rather than trying to sell more computers or secure greater market share of the personal computer industry, Jobs revolutionized the music industry by introducing the iPod, a device capable of holding thousands of digitized music files that could be purchased at low cost from the companion web site, iTunes. Parenthetically, at the time sales of compact discs in the music industry had also plateaued, making Jobs's choice particularly noteworthy. When others copied the idea and created web sites that offered free access to music files, Jobs was not deterred and instead turned his attention to the mobile phone industry. The iPhone was born, a multipurpose device that combined telecommunication, photography, music, and much more. Apple's efforts provide a clear example of one organization's ability to go beyond simply reacting to external threats and instead building resilience by intentionally working to create and actually bring about change. Hamel and Valikangas (2003) capture this concept in their

characterization of a resilient community. These authors stated that the "goal is an organization that is constantly making its future rather than defending its past" (as quoted by Denhardt & Denhardt, 2010; p. 336).

Denhardt and Denhardt (2010) suggest that resilience is not an innate characteristic of either individuals or organizations, but rather one that must be instilled and practiced. Kirmayer, Sehdev, Whitley, Dandeneau, and Isaac (2009) propose three broad forms of community resilience that are by no means mutually exclusive. The first is resistance in which a community works to resist change in a manner that counteracts external threat or challenge. We see this in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East in which both Christian and moderate Muslim communities have remained unwavering in their fidelity to their faith tradition in the face of tremendous threat and attack by radical Islamic factions. The second form of community resilience described by Kirmayer et al (2009) is that of recovery whereby a community is changed in response to severe or extended threat but ultimately returns to its original state once the threat has been defused. The aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City illustrates this form of resilience. The adversarial partisan politics that characterized nearly all levels of the U.S. government gave way to a period of remarkable unity that gradually dissipated once the crisis had passed. Similarly, there



was a period in which the city and the country as a whole displayed a profound sense of community and connection that stood in marked contrast to the more characteristic stance of fierce individualism. Kirmayer et al refer to the third form of community resilience as creativity, a form of resilience that involves transformation of a community in response to adversity. This may include developing new ways of functioning, redefining the mission, or creating new structures and/or institutions. An example of this form of resilience is that of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, otherwise known as the Grey Nuns. For many years, the Order established and operated health care facilities as a means of giving expression to their charism of caring for the suffering of humanity. However, in the face of significant demographic, political and economic pressures, the hospitals once operated by the Order were transferred to church or government corporations. In an effort to maintain remain true to their charism, the Order creatively shifted the focus of their ministries to running women's shelters, clothing and food dispensaries, and centers for the disabled.

ENHANCING RESILIENCY

Resilience is not an all-or-nothing characteristic but one that exists to varying degrees across time and circumstances and is an intentional process that can be developed and enhanced. In light of that reality, communities would do well to ask the question "what adjustments must we make in order to build greater resilience?"

Bangers, Graco, and Murphy (2011) discuss several initiatives that can enhance community resilience in their treatise on the military as an institution that epitomizes many of these characteristics. The first concept, redundancy, focuses on ensuring excess capacity that allows a community to respond to external challenge even when one component fails or is unavailable. For example, institutions that house multiple residents will often ensure gas generators are

Communities would do well to ask: What adjustments must we make to build greater resilience?



available in the event of a power outage. With respect to human capital, communities can build redundancy by attending to succession planning through a process of mentorship.

The second concept, robustness, refers to physical, psychological and spiritual wellbeing. Communities invested in building resilience work to promote robustness in each of these spheres by putting in place appropriate resources. Dioceses and religious orders attend to spiritual wellbeing through the scheduling of annual retreats and/or education days. Some encourage members to engage in regular spiritual direction. Others secure the services of local psychologists or employee assistance firms in order to respond to the mental health needs of their members. Many however, have no corporate strategy for enhancing and promoting physical wellbeing. Yet, simple initiatives can have significant impact. Examples include the distribution of promotional and educational materials that provide members with information on the importance of daily exercise and proper nutrition, encouraging members to undergo regular health screening, scheduling regular dental and optometry visits, ensuring vaccinations are up to date, including an annual flu vaccination, and so on.

Bangers et al (2011) note that flexibility is yet another hallmark of community resilience. Some readers may recall the popular mid-1980's television series MacGyver that featured a U.S. government agent who had a remarkable capacity to improvise under difficult conditions. MacGyver was an exceptional practitioner of bricolage; the skillful ability to make do with whatever is available. In the face of challenge or external threat resilient communities possess the ability to meet changing conditions with agility, responsiveness and a willingness to adapt. The capacity to think beyond conventional ways of doing things can make the difference between extinction, survival, and even thriving. Those who have worked in the missions are well aware

Flexibility is the hallmark of community resilience.



of this concept. A willingness to take risks without fear of failure, criticism, or punishment serves to facilitate flexibility. Communities that are able to create and nurture a culture that allows for risk taking without fear of shame or humiliation are better poised to respond to unexpected occurrences with greater flexibility. This requires a membership committed to active rather than passive participation functioning within a community that espouses a spirit of interdependence as opposed to either subordinate dependence or unyielding independence.

Finally, two essential building blocks of community resilience are communication and competence. In light of the reality that most communities comprise a membership that is geographically dispersed building an effective and rapid communication infrastructure is essential. Responding to either internal or external challenges effectively is made possible if members have ready access to sound, accurate information. But information alone is not enough. In order to be resilient, a community needs to invest in the education and training of its members in order to ensure that the gifts of each are maximized. Harkening back to the maxim that resilient communities create their future rather than defend their past, education and training of members should be forward looking. Resilient communities do well when they are able to recognize that challenges faced in present and those anticipated in the future are different than ones were faced in past, and thus, may require new and unique approaches and skills.

POTENTIAL OBSTACLES TO RESILIENCE

If resilience can be developed and enhanced, it can just as easily be stalled or even eroded by certain community dynamics. Hamel and Valikangas (2003; as sited by Pluess, 2011) identified several aspects of community culture that have the potential to impact negatively on resilience. The first of these falls under the broad umbrella of

cognition or a community's way of viewing itself and the environment in which it exists. Communities that are steeped in denial driven either by a romantic sense of nostalgia or false arrogance regarding their ability to weather the impact of broader social changes are likely to have difficulty considering the ways in which those changes will come to bear on their ability to fully realize their mission. Although fidelity to the core mission and charism is critical to a community's identity, communities must continuously assess the ways in which their vision can be fully animated within the evolving social context. Many communities are slow to embrace the type of creativity and flexibility exhibited by the Sisters of Charity of Montreal in the example described earlier.

The second aspect of community culture that can serve to compromise resilience is what can be referred to as the human factor. Communities that fail to recognize and address the eroding impact of dysfunctional members are likely to be less effective in their response to external challenges. This can happen for countless reasons. In some instances, it may be driven by loyalty to individuals who were once respected community leaders but are now impaired. In other instances, leaders may be too overwhelmed by the demands of leadership to attend to problematic members. Still other leaders may be more invested in focusing on higher order issues and concerns and in the

process, ultimately lose touch with what is happening with members.

The opposite phenomena can also hamper a community's ability to build resilience. Specifically, community leaders that assume a narrow perspective will often have difficulty responding to changing demands and impending threats. Such leaders are likely to find themselves perpetually responding to one crisis after another either as a function of internal pressures or unanticipated external demands. We have witnessed this on a global scale when a head of state errs too much on the side of attending to domestic affairs while ignoring important foreign commitments and in the process contributing to regional destabilization. A recent example comes from Italy, where the Italian president recently criticized his government's preoccupation with national debt while largely ignoring mounting tensions in nearby Ukraine that threatened to destabilize the whole of Europe (Binnie, 2014).

In summary, resilience is a construct that is equally relevant to individuals and communities. It is a dynamic characteristic that builds on an individual's or group's resources. To be strengthened it must be nurtured through intentional effort. This paper has attempted to summarize some of the ways in which resilience can be enhanced as well as compromised.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr. Mikail is a clinical psychologist registered to practice in the province of Ontario. He has served on the board of directors and executive counsels of several professional associations. Throughout his career he has been involved in the training of psychologists and group therapists in Canada. He has been granted the status of diplomate of the American Board of Professional Psychology, the Canadian Psychological Association, and the Section on Clinical Psychology of the Canadian Psychological Association. He has offered consultation and led numerous workshops for mental health professional, clergy and men and women religious on a variety of topics.

IN MY OPINION



This article addresses a timely topic that has implications and applications in a variety of settings in terms of the development of resilience in individuals and in fostering development of resilient

communities and leaders. My work with first responders at the Police & Fire Clinic in Washington, DC has made the importance of resilience and the fostering of its development very clear to me. We have also seen this in high suicide rates in the Armed Forces.

Martin Seligman was invited to devise a program that would increase the level of resilience among members of the United States Army and mitigate the downward spiral that so frequently occurred following traumatic experiences or perceived failure of the mission. It is of significance that Seligman was interested not only in recovery from trauma but also pointed the way to post-traumatic growth. This is not merely a return to the pre-trauma status but to positive growth as persons and, by extension, as communities.

Although members of religious communities, seminarians, or those working in parish settings in our country usually do not have to face the same level of trauma as do members of the military, there are, nevertheless, elements of pain, loss, personal or communal failure. They face poverty, violence, abuse on many levels, the aftermath of natural disasters, or a sense of betrayal by authorities or traditional institutions that can be quite traumatic for the individual as well as for the

community. The model for resilience development Seligman has established offers insights and tools that might well prove useful to those involved in the selection and formation of candidates for religious life and seminary as well as contributing to an individualized approach to ongoing formation and training for leadership.

While in the past much of candidate psychological evaluation focused on screening out those candidates deemed likely to be unsuited for religious life, the screening tests most frequently used often were not as helpful in identifying positive traits or strengths in any detail. Those psychologists currently providing such evaluation services might wish to include in their protocols the Global Assessment Test (GAT) based on the Values in Action Signature Strengths Survey by Christopher Peterson of the University of Michigan. This brief test (about 20 minutes) is designed to measure the four areas of emotional, family, social, and spiritual fitness that contribute to positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment – the building blocks of resilience and growth. A religious, seminary, or parish community might find it useful to invite all members to take the test in order to gauge not only the strengths of individual members but to measure the salient features of the community as a whole. Just as Seligman and his associates offer on-line courses addressing the four areas included in the GAT, those involved in the ongoing formation of community members could offer person-specific opportunities to enhance the emotional, relational, and spiritual elements highlighted by the individual member's test results. The community as a whole could also dedicate communal resources to enhance the positive strengths of the group while seeking remediation for any negatives (i.e. positive traits that were missing altogether or were in short supply) that surfaced.

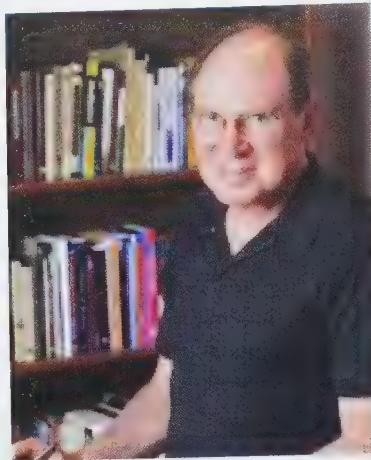
One aspect of Seligman's model of resilience training concerns the formation of those holding leadership roles in the military. He perceives this aspect of his module as having relevance for all who work in management positions whatever the setting as it offers instruction in how to embrace the concept of resilience and then pass along the knowledge to others. All too often, members of religious communities who are called upon to serve in leadership positions are ill prepared for their leadership roles. They might have achieved excellence in other capacities. Seligman would encourage training in mental toughness – actually training geared toward avoiding the cognitive traps of seeing the worst or taking an overly pessimistic view of a situation, particularly with reference to a personal or communal experience of failure. He strongly endorses building on signature strengths, a reminder that each person in a leadership role brings certain gifts to the group – and a reminder no one person can be expected to have all of them. Thirdly, Seligman urges the acquisition of practical tools for positive communication and effective praise. Assisting potential or new leaders to acquire these skills early in the course of their preparation for or soon following the assumption of their positions ought to go a long way to alleviate the fear of leadership or the burnout that afflicts the hard-working, well-intentioned leader.

I was particularly interested in Mikail's section devoted to the components of community and organizational resilience, particularly when operating in an environment characterized by the presence of change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise - an apt description of religious and priestly life in our times. This last segment brought me to consider the role of Pope Francis and the recent meeting dedicated to the family. What we have the opportunity to do now is to develop resilience that takes the form of enhanced creativity and flexibility, a transformation of the church and its individual members. It might

reveal post-traumatic growth in the course of which are developed new ways of functioning in light of the advances in modern science, developments in the psychosocial understanding of the human person, and the changed and challenging circumstances of our world.

As we stand in the darkness of December, with only the Advent candles to offer us light, let us remember that resilience is a child of Hope who will be born of our openness to change, our acceptance of the need to take risks, and our willingness to keep on working for the desired change even if it is unlikely to occur in our lifetimes.

Mary Elizabeth Kenel, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist who works with first responders at the Police & Fire Clinic in Washington, DC. She is the author of Seasoned with Sage: Savoring Life's Wisdom.



Archbishop Desmond Tutu was once speaking at General Theological Seminary in New York City to the Episcopalian seminarians. Half way through Tutu's presentation,

one of the young men sitting out in the audience next to the dean, nudged him and said, "Desmond Tutu is a holy man." Well you never make such a grand statement to a dean and expect to get away with it so the dean said in response, "How do you know that Desmond Tutu is holy?" In response, the young seminarian didn't even blink. He said, "I know that Desmond Tutu is holy because when I am with Desmond Tutu, I feel holy."

As can be surmised when reading the article by Samuel Mikail the same can be said about resilience. When resilient persons enter the room, we can borrow from their sense of inner strength and centeredness. So, as was pointed out in the article there is a communal aspect to personal resilience, which leads to important spiritual consequences since in Christianity we move toward God together.

Each person has a resiliency range that is formed, more or less, by DNA or genetics and early childhood experiences. Reading this article and its suggestions helps us understand ways we can expand that range through motivation, knowledge, and hopefully wisdom. Yet, wisdom comes at a price: a willingness to be open, unlearn, and adapt to new situations because change is a constant in life and God is dynamic, not an idol to be frozen in place. Openness is

not easy though, even if we want it because it requires at its heart a key virtue that is not easy to possess—even if we want it.

A number of months ago my daughter who is a social worker asked my granddaughters over dinner what they felt their signature strengths were. She said to them that she wanted to know which gifts God had given to them that they could develop and share with others as young people and eventually as adults. Although only 11 and 13 years of age at the time they launched into a list of their talents. When they had finally finished, my son-in-law who was sitting silently by, finally asked, "Well, what about humility?"

In response the youngest asked, "Well, what exactly is humility?" He responded by saying, "Well get the dictionary and we shall see." After she scurried and got it, he read the definition and asked them, "Well whom do you think of when I read that description of humility?" to which my two granddaughters and daughter responded immediately, "Mom-Mom!" referring to my wife. He then asked, "Well, what about Pop-Pop?" to which they responded while shaking their heads from side to side, "No, not Pop-Pop."

Humility is not easy for us to possess--even if we recognize its value as being at the core of openness. But it is essential that we all seek it so we don't run the risk of either inordinate self-confidence on the one hand or exaggerated self-doubt on the other. One spiritual guide once said to those attending his presentation, "You are all perfect as you are." Then after a short pause he then added, "And, you could all use a little improvement." Resilience, as Mikail points out in his article, requires sound self-awareness.

Spiritual resilience is also based on a true belief in the imago Dei: namely, that we are made in the image and likeness of God and should have a desire to seek to live up to this reality. As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel shortly before his death said in

TV interview when asked if he had a message for the young, "You must live your life as if it were a work of art. Every word counts. Every action makes a difference."

So, how do we accomplish this? Well the author of the article on resilience points the way in a number of directions. In line with his comments, I believe because of its importance I think what I would like to emphasize here include: self-care, a recognition of the dangers to resilience for those who minister; and the need for a prayer life that is Teresian—namely that we have a deep recognition that the more we know God, the more we know ourselves, and the more we appreciate who we really are—in our totality, not just our sins or gifts alone—the more we can appreciate the living God.

Self-care is essential because one of the greatest gifts we can share with others is a sense of our own peace but we can't share what we don't have. Developing a realistic but comprehensive self-care program that includes such things as friendship, alone time, reasonable exercise and healthy leisure time activities is essential. (See book *Bounce: Living the Resilient Life* for a more comprehensive list.)

Appreciating the dangers of being compassionate is also important. Being a healing presence is simple and powerful...but not easy! We must be aware that when we interact with those who are depressed, ill, angry, jaded, in darkness, fearful, anxious or under great stress we can become contaminated by their negative spirit. Accordingly we must debrief ourselves at the end of each day by undertaking a theological reflection that is also psychologically informed. This can be one by looking at the objective, what happened, and then searching our cognitions ways of thinking, perceiving and understanding so we can see our reactions to all we have faced. This is essential because we often think foolish things such as: If I do good things then people

will be grateful and respond. If I truly do my part, others will do theirs and recognize my efforts. The reality is in ministry we are not in the success business but in the faithfulness business. In a spirit of 1 Corinthians 12, we must find our charism, feed it, and then share it freely expecting nothing in return.

Finally, to be resilient we must be people of serious and deep prayer. By that I mean we should try to avoid the three dark alleys that are tempting when we seek greater self-awareness or a deeper connection with God in the silence. They include: arrogance (when we project the blame on others); ignorance (where we condemn ourselves) and discouragement (because we want immediate results.) The goal in both prayer and self-reflection instead is intrigue as to where God is in the darkness as well as the light. In the spirit of John of the Cross, where in the darkness is God making new space within us for himself.

I am grateful to Dr. Mikail for providing an overview of the importance of resilience in both individuals and within communities and congregations. He deserves a great deal of credit for sharing his insights into the literature and his own personal wisdom. Now, we must take it a step further and bring to prayer and in our actions what he has taught us and what more we can learn on the topic so how we live, minister, and form those we lead emanates from a strong inner life.

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PRAYER

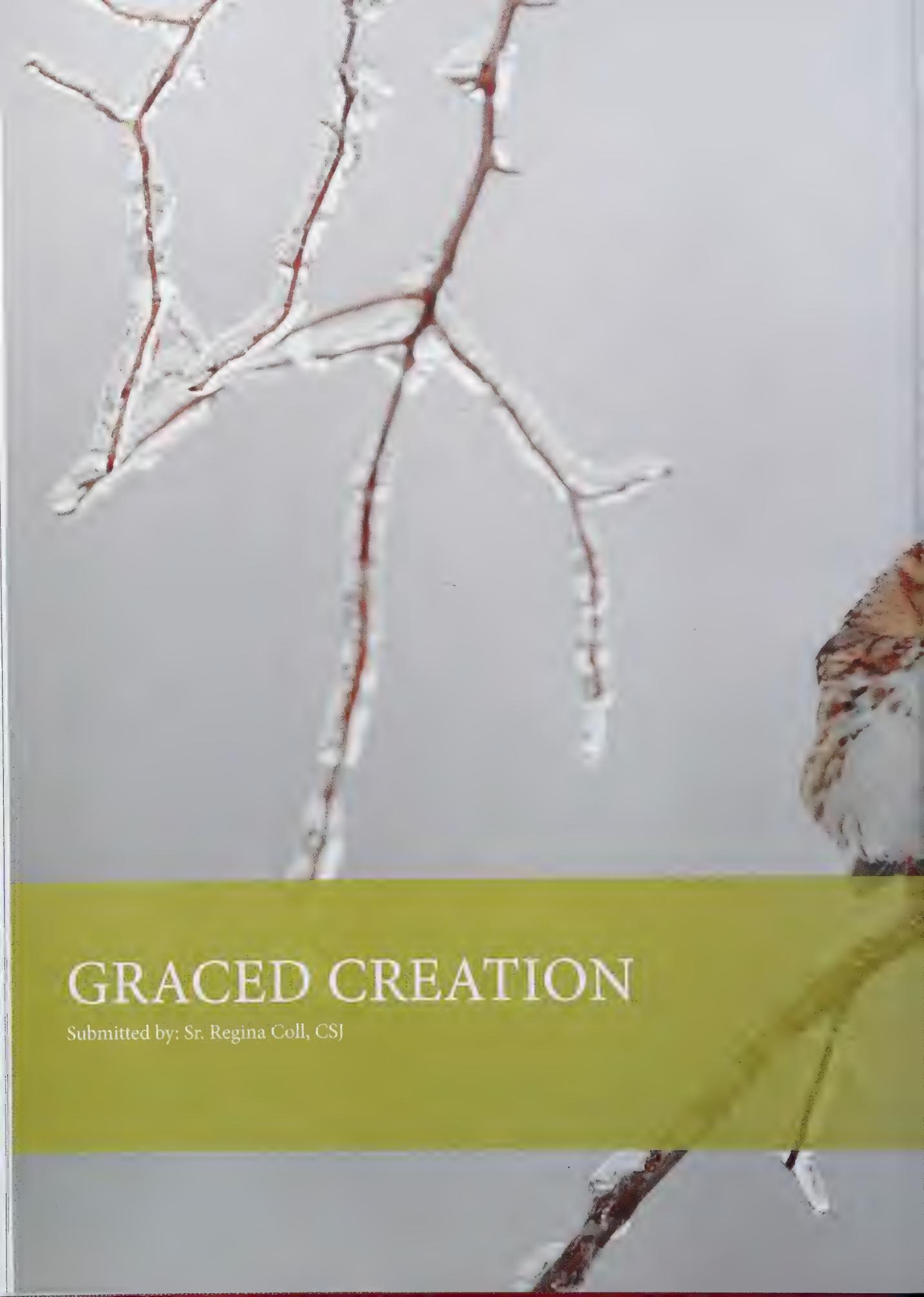
God, in Baptism you called me by name and made me member of your people, the Church.

Help all your people to know their vocation in life, and to respond by living a life of holiness.

For your greater glory and for the service of your people, raise up dedicated and generous leaders who will serve as sisters, priests, brothers, deacons, and lay ministers.

Send your Spirit to guide and strengthen me that I may serve your people following the example of your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name I offer this prayer.

Amen.

The background image shows a close-up of a tree branch with several small, reddish-brown berries hanging from its twigs. The branch is set against a bright, overexposed sky. In the bottom right corner, a portion of a person's face is visible, showing their eye and forehead. The overall composition is artistic and somewhat abstract.

GRACED CREATION

Submitted by: Sr. Regina Coll, CSJ



When our good and gracious God decided to create this universe, the Holy One joyfully established relationships among all creatures. Stars, oceans, flowers, wind, animals – all exist in this interrelated universe, dependent on one another. All exist to the praise and glory of God. The magnificence of all creation is so awe-inspiring that poets and musicians through the ages have struggled to sing God's praises. The psalmist intones:

Make a joyful noise, all the earth;
Break forth in joyful song!
Sing praise to God with the harp,
with the lyre, and the sound of music!
With trumpets and the sound of the horn!
Make a joyful noise to our God,
Let the sea roar and all that fills it –
the world and those who dwell in it!
Let the rivers clap their hands,
And the hills ring out their joy.

— From Psalm 98

St. Augustine, in one of his sermons, puts it thus: "I asked the earth; I asked the sea and the deeps; among the living animals, the things that creep; I asked the winds that blow; I asked the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars.... My question was the gaze I turned to them. Their answer was their beauty."

While there has always been a thread of consideration to all of creation in Christian theology, until very recently, most theological thought focused our attention on relationships among human beings and our relationship with God. Theologians today are enlarging that field to include the rest of creation – including the earth itself. Elisabeth Johnson, for instance, challenges "For the sake of the integrity of the truth it seeks to teach and live by, theology needs to take account of how the world created by God actually works, according to the best of our current human knowledge."

We can look to the psalmist for instruction as he prays,

Praise God, sun and moon,
Praise God, shining stars,
Praise God, highest heavens
And the waters above the heavens!

Praise God, all you on earth,
Sea monsters and all deeps,
Fire and hail, snow and frost,
Stormy winds that obey God's word

- Psalm 148

We are, very lately, coming to realize that not just we humans but all of creation shares in the life of God. Theology's task here is to both integrate and challenge science's understanding of the universe with the long tradition of Christianity. Karl Rahner, outstanding twentieth century Jesuit theologian, called our attention to creation beyond ourselves. "We belong here . . ." he says, "The earth bears children whose hearts know no limits, and what the earth gives them is too beautiful for them to despise and too poor to enrich them. . . . And so we are here on the earth, our home, and yet it is not enough." With these words Rahner helped set the agenda for the current theological ecology movement, that process by which humanity is coming aware of our rather ambivalent relationship with the rest of creation.

Rahner held that the scientific theory of evolution was not incompatible with Christian teaching. He insisted that all of nature is graced, that the whole of creation shares the self-gift of our loving God. God saturates the universe. So mysterious is this presence that many find it hard to accept that matter, the stuff of creation, has the capacity to become more, to transcend itself. It seems that to accept the teachings of evolution is to deny the power and involvement of God in creation. Nothing could be further from the truth. While the presence of God cannot be measured by science, it can be affirmed, as Johnson puts it, "in its own created integrity from a theological perspective." The universe is sacramental, it is full of signs of God's presence. It tells us about God. This presence did not come about with the advent of human creatures on earth but from the very

beginning, some 13.7 billion years ago. God was manifest in creation long before we appeared. Ilia Delio holds that "From the Big Bang to the present moment the universe is God-filled, divine-love-engendered matter." Or as Aquinas argued, not only is God in all things, all things are in God, that is, held close by our living, loving God in a nurturing embrace.

Hildegarde of Bignin, twelfth century mystic, offers a delightful image of the human experience of this relationship. She presents a pregnant woman, umbilical cord winding up through vines, birds and butterflies to the Trinity, carrying Grace from the Triune God to the child within her womb. God's life pours into us in our mother's womb; we are born in a state of grace, touched by sin but assured that "where sin abounds, grace abounds more." Human nature is graced from the first instance of its creation, so much so that if we were able to see that graced nature, we would be blinded by the vision.

Our job now is to train ourselves to observe the glory of God manifest in all creation, not just the human. I am not here talking about the sense of serene beauty experienced in quiet time before the ocean or in the majesty of mountains. This glory may be thought of as closer to a kind of mathematical beauty. The simple understanding of the order, integrity and interrelationship of creation is luminous in its own right. However we accomplish it, we now are able to glimpse the awesome magnificence of all of creation.

As we strive to discern the development of the universe, we are made aware that God does not act as a sort of secondary cause forcing creation into a preordained pattern. Creation is allowed the freedom to evolve with its own integrity. Creation evolves according to its own God-given freedom, not depending on God's miraculous interference. Johnson suggests that thanks to God's gracious love creation participates in its own becoming. God lets the world be what it will be.

Cosmologist Brian Swimme has contributed to that account of how the world comes to be by drawing on the wisdom tradition of science, religion, art and philosophy, all toward the aim of the transformation of the human community.

He invites us not only to learn the facts of the new creation story but to come to experience it physically, to live it in our bodilyness.

Swimme maintains that "Our natural state is intimacy with the encompassing community." This intimacy makes possible deep relationships with all species of life and even with nonliving components of our universe. The interconnectedness of all creation provides exciting avenues of reflection for all Christians as well as for theologians.

Human beings, we whose very existence arises from and is interdependent with the rest of creation, by our very nature exist in a state of intimacy with that vast community. So deeply are we bonded to all other creatures that ultimate separation from them is impossible.

Such is the nature of the cosmic intimacy that Swimme describes human generosity in terms of the generosity of the sun. Human generosity is possible, he says,

"because at the center of the solar system a magnificent stellar generosity pours forth the free energy day and night without stop and without complaint and without the slightest hesitation. This is the way of the universe. This is the way of life." He further states that we humans are thus enabled to use the sun's gift of energy to

enable the community to flourish. Swimme's convincing and poetic description of the sun's impulse toward self-giving generosity makes possible the sharing of life-giving energy by plants, animals and humans on earth.

The beauty of the science being developed is matched by the beauty of the theology challenged by that science but at the same time arising out of the Christian tradition. Irish poet-philosopher John O'Donohue tells us that, "To participate in beauty is to come in the presence of the Holy." This beauty is the first thing that the plants and animals teach us when we ask about their religious meaning, says Johnson. It is that they are the work of the Creator. Their life and vitality are gifts from our generous God who gives and nourishes all life. Over and over, theologians call us to responsibility for this God-infused creation. In Swimme's words, we are to "enter and inhabit the universe as a communion event."

I can see no better way to close here than with the charming and challenging words of Ilia Delio,

"Whether we see the present moment as hopeful or hopeless, it is our moment to act. We need to let go of controlling God, controlling our lives, controlling the church and controlling the world."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sr. Regina Coll, CSJ is a Sister of St. Joseph, Brentwood, NY. She is emerita faculty, University of Notre Dame where she was the director of Field Education in the M.Div. program.



UPDATE FROM USCCB

The Church recently began the celebration of the Year of Consecrated Life on the First Sunday of Advent 2014. Pope Francis envisioned this special year as a time to make a grateful remembrance of the recent past while embracing the future with hope. In addition, the year also marks the 50th anniversary of *Perfectae Caritatis*—a decree on religious life—and *Lumen Gentium*—the Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Church. The year will run through the World Day of Consecrated Life on February 2, 2016.

In our own country, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations (CCLV) is promoting “Days with Religious” initiatives and resources in conjunction with the Conference of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR), the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM). The purpose is to help families learn about the consecrated life of religious men and women. Activities will focus on sharing experiences of prayer, service and community life with those living a consecrated life.

The events planned are as follows:
February 8, 2015: Religious Open House. Events will include tours, open houses, receptions, family activities, and presentations on the history of religious communities at convents, abbeys, monasteries and religious houses.

Summer 2015: Day of Mission and Service with Religious. Events will include joining religious in their apostolates or special service projects, such as assisting the elderly, ministering to the poor and homeless, and caring for the less fortunate.

September 13, 2015: Day of Prayer with Religious. Events will include vespers, rosary or holy hours in convents, monasteries, religious houses, parishes and churches.

The focus on families is especially fitting given the upcoming celebration of the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in September and the Synod on the Family in October.

In addition, it seems appropriate to also consider the importance of praying and working for an increase of vocations to the consecrated life. It is well known that many religious communities are aging and that, while there are thousands of men and women currently in religious formation in the United States, there is need for many more. Over the years, consecrated men and women have made a tremendous difference in the Church and wider society by founding and staffing schools, hospitals and other institutions. How grateful we are for their generosity and the hope they continue to bring to so many! As the Chairman of the CCLV Committee, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge has written, “It is the responsibility of the entire church to ensure that this unique form of discipleship continues to provide similar hope to future generations.”

Prayers intentions, prayer cards, videos on consecrated life and other resources are available at the USCCB website: usccb.org



UPDATE FROM CMSM

From Monday, October 27 through Wednesday, October 29, 2014, the CMSM sponsored and hosted a workshop entitled “Boundary Violations, Intervention Plans, and Supervision,” at the Whitley Theological Center of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas.

Approximately one hundred persons attended and participated, hearing presentations designed to assist major superiors, their staffs, and associates to recognize, evaluate, and prevent the escalation of boundary violations which left unchecked might lead to serious offenses against minors and vulnerable persons. Drs. Monica Applewhite, James Coupe, and Paul Ashton explored aspects of the topics which urged prevention as the norm in common life, acceptance of intervention as a necessary step for persons in roles of responsibility, the necessary involvement of review boards to objectively monitor situations, and the proposed strategies that help to reduce risks.

Fr. Gerard McGlone, SJ, of Guest House, offered a faith-centered theological reflection inviting participants to spiritually reflect upon the working of God as the source of healing which might follow upon the sinful devastation inflicted upon the vulnerable. In addition, members of the staff of Praesidium, Inc., an agency singularly devoted to the protection of minors through the adoption of a methodology for the accreditation of institutions, discussed policies and practices most suited to support the reduction of risks and procedures to follow in the investigation of violations. In the concluding hours of the workshop, participants reviewed fictional yet realistic case studies to apply the principles shared. Through discussions and responses to presentations, healthy living within common

life emerged strongly as a theme of continuing concern for participants.

To fulfill its mission and purpose to support leaders of men’s religious institutes, monastic communities, and societies of apostolic life, the Conference annually sponsors a four-day New Leaders’ Workshop to educate, alert, inform, sensitize, and prepare men who are new to the ministry of leadership. This year’s workshop was held from Monday, November 17 through Thursday, November 20 at the Washington Retreat House adjacent to the campus of the Catholic University of American in Washington, DC.

Topics addressed covered: Self-Care and Spirituality of Leadership; the Praesidium Accreditation Process; Civil and Canon Law Issues; Dealing with Difficulty Members; Leadership’s Role in Vocational Ministry; and Retirement Issues and the National Religious Retirement Office and its Grants. Presenters included Ms. Christy Schiller of Praesidium Religious Services; Br. Paul Bednarczyk, CSC of the National Religious Vocation Conference; Sister Sharon Ewart, RSSM, JCD and Ms. Donna Miller, JD, JCL, of the Resource Center for Religious Institutes; Fr. Gerard McGlone, SJ, of Guest House; and, Sister Janice Bader, CPPS, Br. Robert Metzger, SM, and Br. Hank Sammon, FMS of the National Religious Retirement Office. Perhaps most significantly, new leaders meet one another and find peers who serve as colleagues, brothers and friends in the exercise of fraternal leadership ministry. The Conference of Major Superiors of Men sponsors a similar workshop annually to support leadership in the fulfillment of their roles and responsibilities.

YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE

In 2013, Pope Francis declared that a Year of Consecrated Life be celebrated throughout the world.

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations is coordinating the commemoration of this special year. Plans include "Days with Religious," a series of initiatives and resources to help people learn about the consecrated life of religious men and women. Activities will focus on sharing experiences of prayer, service, and community life with those living a consecrated life.

The Year of Consecrated Life will begin on the First Sunday of Advent, the weekend of November 29, 2014, and end on February 2, 2016, the World Day of Consecrated life. The year also marks the 50th anniversary of *Perfectae Caritatis*, a decree on religious life, and *Lumen Gentium*, the Second Vatican Council's constitution on the Church. Its purpose, as stated by the Vatican is to "make a grateful remembrance of the recent past" while embracing "the future with hope."

"The 'Days with Religious' activities will represent great opportunities for families and adults to look at the many ways men and women serve Christ and the Church while answering the call to live in consecrated life," said Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Raleigh, North Carolina, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations.

Catholics are invited to join activities that will be promoted in collaboration with the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, (CMSWR), the Leadership Conference of

Women Religious (LCWR) and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM).

The events planned are as follows:

February 8, 2015: Religious Open House. Events will be coordinated to also celebrate the World Meeting of Families to take place in Philadelphia and will include tours, open houses, receptions, family activities, and presentations on the history of religious communities at convents, abbeys, monasteries and religious houses

Summer 2015: Day of Mission and Service with Religious. Events will include joining religious in their ministries or special service projects, such as assisting the elderly, ministering to the poor and homeless, and caring for the less fortunate

September 13, 2015: Day of Prayer with Religious. Events will include vespers, rosary or holy hours in convents, monasteries, religious houses, parishes and churches.



WAKE UP THE WORLD!
— 2015 Year of Consecrated Life —

Prayers intentions, prayer cards, a video on consecrated life and other resources are available on the USCCB website.

Additional resources can be found at:
National Catholic Vocation Conference
National Catholic Sisters Week LCWR president-elect Marcia Allen, CSJ participated in a press conference on October 1, 2014 to announce the plans for the Days with Religious A video recording of the event is available on the USCCB website.



UPDATE FROM CARA

Incorporating Cultural Diversity in Religious Life:

A Report for the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC)

The National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) to learn from religious institutes about their policies, procedures, and experiences with the formation and integration of candidates from cultures different from the dominant one of the institute.

The goal of the research is to provide information that will help promote religious life and strengthen its quality so that it will better attract and retain new members. What follows is a summary of the findings.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES

Nine in 10 religious institutes report that the dominant racial/ethnic culture of the institute is white. On average, nine in 10 full members of religious institutes are Caucasian/White/Anglo, 6 percent are Hispanic/Latino(a), 3 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 percent are African American/Black/African. Institutes of men are slightly more racially/ethnically diverse than are institutes of women.

Those who have entered religious institutes in the past 10 years are more diverse, reflecting the increasing diversity in the U.S. Catholic population as a whole. Among those entering in the past 10 years, 57 percent are Caucasian/White/Anglo, 17 percent are Hispanic/Latino(a), 16 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander, 8 percent are African American/Black/African,

and 2 percent are Native American or other race/ethnicity.

- More than six in 10 institutes report having at least one entrant in the past 10 years born outside the United States. Institutes of men are particularly likely to have had someone from outside the U.S. enter in the past 10 years.
- Eight in 10 institutes of men and about two-thirds of institutes of women have at least one person in initial formation. Among those in initial formation, three in five are Caucasian/White/Anglo, about one in six is Asian/Pacific Islander, just over one in 10 is Hispanic/Latino(a), one in 20 is African American/Black/African, and about 4 percent are Native American or some other race/ethnicity.
- Almost six in 10 institutes have at least one person currently in initial formation born outside the United States. Institutes of men are somewhat more likely than institutes of women to report having someone from outside the United States in initial formation.

RECRUITMENT OF CULTURALLY DIVERSE CANDIDATES

- About two-thirds of responding superiors indicate that their vocation directors/vocation committees, institute leaders, and formation personnel are “very” open to recruiting candidates from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of their institutes. Fewer than half report that their members, in general, are “very” open to such recruitment.
- Seven in 10 report that their institute’s website displays a diversity of cultures. About six in



10 indicate that the majority of their printed promotional materials display a diversity of cultures. International institutes and missionary institutes are more likely to display a variety of cultures in their online and printed materials.

- Candidates born outside the United States are accepted by more than nine in 10 institutes. Just over half, however, have policies and procedures in place for accepting such candidates. Institutes of men are more likely than institutes of women to have such policies and procedures. International institutes are more likely than those that are entirely U.S. based to have policies and procedures regarding accepting candidates with limited English skills and to provide an acculturation program for new members from outside the United States.
- In response to an open-ended question about how they reach out to potential candidates from other cultures, institute leaders frequently mention these practices: appointing vocation directors of diverse backgrounds, reaching out to diverse candidates in the minority and/or immigrant communities where the members live and work, and being welcoming to diverse candidates when they host open houses or participate in ethnic celebrations.

INTEGRATING CULTURALLY DIVERSE MEMBERS INTO INITIAL FORMATION PROGRAMS

- More than three-quarters of institutes report that their vocation directors/vocation committees, formation personnel, and institute leaders are “very” open to welcoming those in initial formation who are from cultures

different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of their institutes. Just over half of the members in general are said to be as open to welcoming such candidates.

- When asked to describe what their institute has done well to accommodate new members of different cultures, institutes are especially likely to mention establishing houses of formation in other countries or cultures, having bilingual formation staff, and having multicultural formation communities.
- When asked how often their institutes engage in practices to welcome those in initial formation from diverse cultures, more than half of institutes report at least “occasionally” openly discussing cultural differences, sharing a community meal with food from another culture, celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of another country, educating community members about another culture, and celebrating holidays of different cultures.
- Units that are part of an international institute or society are more likely than those that are U.S. based to use multiple languages in prayer to celebrate the holidays of different cultures, and to provide a mentor from the same culture for those in initial formation. Similarly, units that are part of a missionary institute or society are more likely than those that are not to use multiple languages in prayer, celebrate with ethnic dance or song, educate members about another culture, and celebrate holidays of different cultures.
- One of the most frequently mentioned challenges for integrating new members into institutes concerns the difficulties some of them have in maintaining formation staffs when they have infrequent entrants into their

communities. Furthermore, some indicate that having so few peers can make those participating in initial formation feel isolated.

INTEGRATING CULTURALLY DIVERSE MEMBERS INTO COMMUNITY LIFE

In response to an open-ended question about challenges to integrating new members into institutes, institutes are most likely to mention the age gap between the established and newer members, language and communication challenges, difficulties with the Immigration and Naturalization Services' regulations, and a lack of understanding of each other's cultural background.

More than half of responding superiors report that their vocation directors/vocation committees, formation personnel, and institute leaders are "very" open to accommodating the customs and practices of new members from cultures different from the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of their institutes. About three in 10 agree that their members in general are "very" open to such accommodation.

To develop or encourage cultural awareness in their institutes, about half to two-thirds of respondents have engaged in the following practices in the past year: used music from another culture in prayer, encouraged members to learn another language, displayed art from another culture, contacted someone from another culture about a vocation to religious life, sponsored or attended a mission trip to another culture, or shared cultural traditions in holiday celebrations. Missionary institutes are more likely than those that are not missionary to engage in practices that

encourage cultural awareness and integrate diversity into their unit.

- To integrate diversity into their institutes in the past year, over half of superiors report encouraging minority members to share their culture in community life, and four in 10 have accommodated family visits for minority members. More than two in 10 report increasing the visibility or mentoring minority members for institute leadership. International institutes are as likely as domestic institutes

The goal of this research is to help promote religious life and strengthen its quality so that it will better attract and retain new members

to engage in practices to encourage cultural awareness and integrate diversity.

- When asked what their unit has done well to accommodate new members of different cultures, responding superiors mentioned practices such as providing language tutoring or English as a Second Language courses to new members, encouraging new members to have contact with others of their culture outside the institute, and giving new members positions of responsibility and/or leadership within the institute.

The complete report *Incorporating Cultural Diversity in Religious Life: A Report for the National Religious Vocation Conference* is available on the NRVC website nrvc.net

The authors of the report are Mary Gautier, PhD, Jonathon Wiggins, PhD, and Jonathon Holland, MA.

UPCOMING EVENTS

GUEST HOUSE SUMMER
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
SOMERSET INN
TROY, MI
JULY 20-22, 2015

USCCB- CCLV REGIONAL WORKSHOP
ON NEW GUIDELINES FOR RECEIVING
PASTORAL MINISTERS
LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY
LOS ANGELES, CA
JANUARY 8, 2015

UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS
IRVING, TX
March 12, 2015

GUEST HOUSE ALUMNI
WINTER SEMINAR
DIAMONDHEAD BEACH RESORT
FORT MYERS BEACH, FL
JANUARY 12-15, 2015

GUEST HOUSE ALUMNAE
WINTER RETREAT
DIAMONDHEAD BEACH RESORT
FORT MYERS BEACH, FL
JANUARY 15-18, 2015

NATIONAL CATHOLIC COUNCIL ON
ADDICTIONS (NCCA) SUBSTANCE
ADDICTION MINISTRY TRAINING
GOOD SHEPHERD PARISH
PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA
JANUARY 17, 2015

RELIGIOUS OPEN HOUSE
EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE USA
FEBRUARY 8, 2015

GUEST HOUSE WALKING WITH
THE WOUNDED
SCRIPPS MANSION
LAKE ORION, MI
MAY 6-8, 2015
JUNE 3-5, 2015
OCTOBER 7-9, 2015

GUEST HOUSE 30TH ANNUAL
GOLF CLASSIC
OAKHURST GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB
CLARKSTON, MI
JUNE 15, 2015



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